

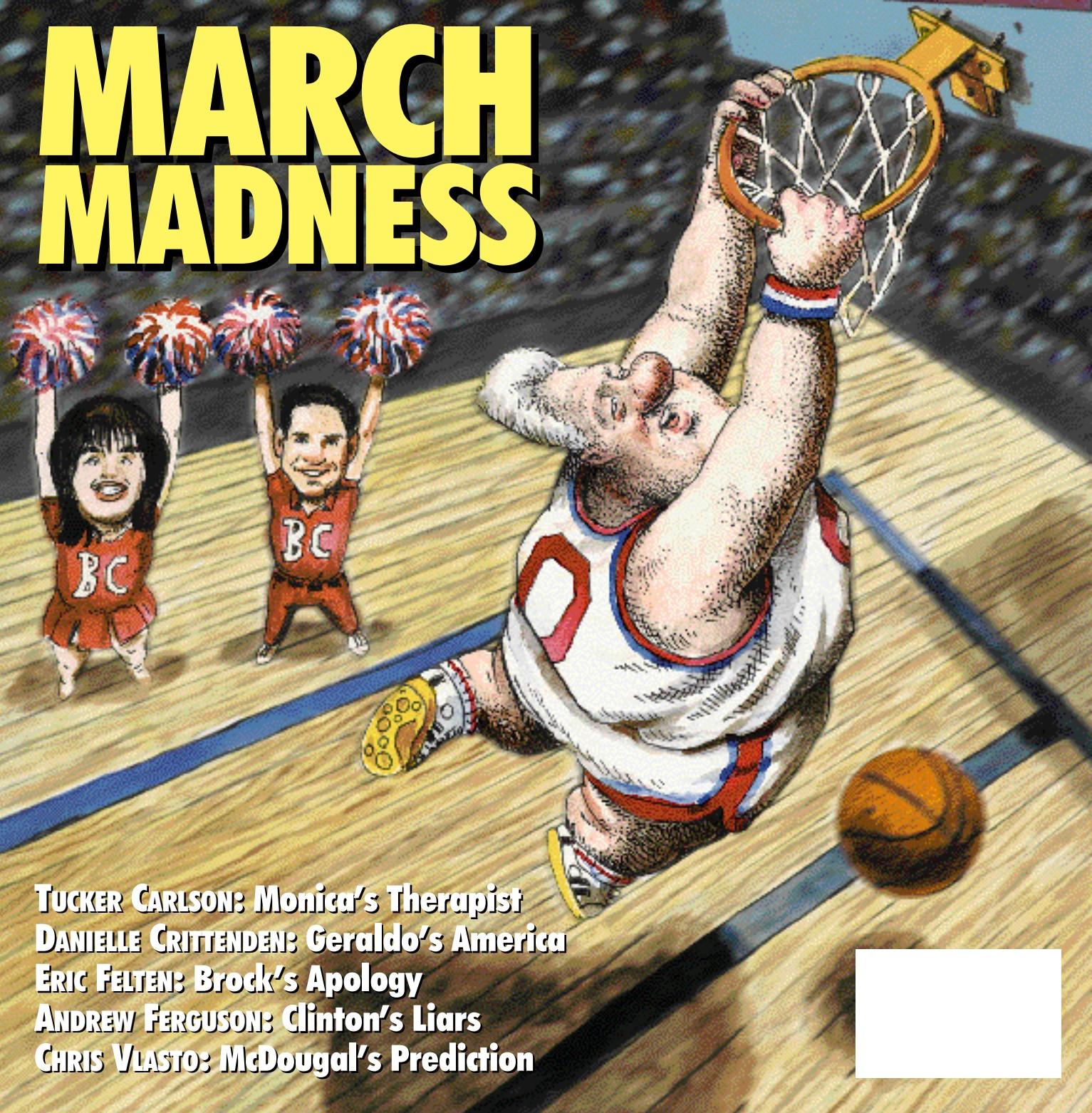
ALLY McBEAL  
AND HER SISTERS  
MELINDA LEDDEN SIDAK

# the weekly Standard

MARCH 23, 1998

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## MARCH MADNESS



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**DANIELLE CRITTENDEN:** Geraldo's America

**ERIC FELTON:** Brock's Apology

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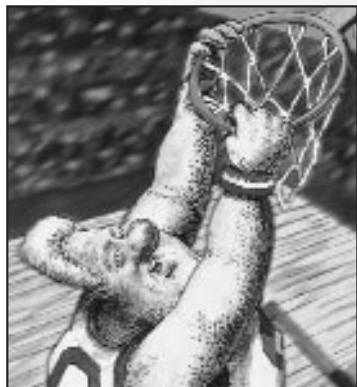
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## SID BLUMENTHAL, DIRTY TRICKSTER

**S**idney Blumenthal didn't wait until he got to the White House to serve as an operative for President Clinton. And no, THE SCRAPBOOK isn't talking about those puff pieces Sid wrote about Clinton (and about Hillary, too) in the *New Yorker*. Those were just Sid's *public*

work on the Clintons' behalf. But Sid also had an underground role, THE SCRAPBOOK has learned. Not only did he work closely with behind-the-scenes operatives in fashioning Clinton's message—all the while remaining on the *New Yorker* payroll. But when a question came

up about Bob Dole's position or plans, Sid was particularly helpful. He would put on his journalist's hat, call the Dole campaign, learn what he could, and then report back to the Clinton camp. That, of course, wasn't journalism. It wasn't even quiet advice-giving. It was a dirty trick.

### EAVESDROPPING AT THE *NEW YORK TIMES*

**I**t is a federal crime to eavesdrop on, tape record, or disclose the contents of other people's cellular telephone conversations. The same law that makes these activities illegal also allows the victim of such eavesdropping to sue the snoop and his confederates for punitive damages.

But what if one of the apparent malefactors is a senior congressional Democrat? And what if the embarrassed victims are senior congressional Republicans? And what if the party that made the conversations public is the *New York Times*? Well, then the wiretapping is a positive public service, and the law should not apply. According to the *New York Times*, anyway.

At issue is that late 1996 phone call among House Republican leaders that two Florida Democrats, John and Alice Martin, heard over their police scanner and tape recorded. The Martins, you'll recall, delivered the resulting recording to Rep. Jim McDermott, ranking Democrat on the House Ethics Committee. And McDermott then promptly played the recording for *Times* reporter Adam Clymer. Clymer wrote an account of the conversation designed to make it appear that House speaker Newt Gingrich had violated an agreement with the Ethics Committee.

House GOP conference chairman John Boehner, who was in Florida and whose cell phone was the Martins' immediate target, has now sued McDermott, as the law allows. The *Times* editorial page, amazingly, calls Boehner's suit a "vindictive political move . . . that threatens to trample on free speech and Congressional prerogatives." So it's McDermott's prerogative as a congressman to break the law, but it's vindictive for Boehner to complain? Anything that humiliates Newt Gingrich apparently constitutes "information of substantial public interest." And no matter how such information might be obtained, the *Times* argues, American citizens, "including members of Congress," must be able to facilitate its publication "without fear of legal reprisal." Call it the "Clymer exemption" to the federal wiretapping ban.

Hmmmm. Say someone were to break into the law offices of Clinton lawyer David Kendall and steal memos describing Kendall's conversations with the president about Monica Lewinsky. Say those documents were to wind up at THE WEEKLY STANDARD by way of John Boehner. Say we were to publish them because they contained "information of substantial public interest"—which any such documents surely would. And say Clinton or Kendall were then to sue John Boehner, a result the law would clearly sanction and encourage. What would happen then? Do you think the *New York Times* editorial page would criticize the president and his lawyer for daring to "trample on free speech and Congressional prerogatives"?

No? Neither do we.

### ROD GRAMS, APPEASER

**T**he last time we caught up with GOP senator Rod Grams, he was helping Dianne Feinstein block a Senate resolution on human rights in China. And not even a very tough resolution. It merely urged the Clinton administration to urge the U.N. to criticize China for human-rights violations. Despite the efforts of Feinstein and Grams, the Senate passed the resolution last week 95-5. But not before Grams gave a repellent speech at a meeting of the Foreign Relations Committee.

The problem, said Grams, is that the Chinese government doesn't take kindly to public pressure; indeed, Grams announced that Beijing "will listen more to the Chinese people than they will listen to the threats from outside its borders." Yes. They listen to their people and imprison the uppity ones.

But Grams managed mainly to insult his colleagues on the Foreign Relations Committee. "Many of you agree with me privately," he informed other senators, and then challenged them "to prove to me that these efforts to demagogue improvements are productive." As for those interest groups that have criticized China's human-rights abuses, Grams wondered whether they were really just motivated by greed: "I am disappointed that certain grass-

# Scrapbook



roots groups have chosen to capitalize on concerns about China just to further their own fund-raising goals."

Say this for Grams: He has no talent for demagoguery himself. After his speech, his 17 colleagues were moved to vote unanimously against him, and for the resolution.

## THE DO-NOTHING CONGRESS

Republicans on Capitol Hill are pinching themselves with delight over the high poll numbers they have achieved simply by doing nothing. Their strategy has two parts. First: Don't schedule votes on anything serious. And, second: If you have to vote on something serious, vote against it—even if the nay vote is tantamount to a vote against the Constitution.

Last week, Kentucky Republican Mitch McConnell tried to abolish federal racial quotas in highway construction that are plainly unconstitutional. His amendment to kill so-called set-asides in federal contracts was defeated in the Senate. That set-aside program will survive because 15 Republicans—*fifteen*—were worried over how it might

look if they were finally to bring federal law into compliance with the Fourteenth Amendment.

Let's name names. Those Republicans are as follows: Kit Bond of Missouri, Ben Nighthorse Campbell of Colorado, John Chafee of Rhode Island, Susan Collins of Maine, Alfonse D'Amato of New York, Pete Domenici of New Mexico, Jim Jeffords of Vermont, Dirk Kempthorne of Idaho, John McCain of Arizona, Frank Murkowski of Alaska, Bill Roth of Delaware, Olympia Snowe of Maine, Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania, Ted Stevens of Alaska, and John Warner of Virginia. (It goes almost without saying that every Democrat but one, Ernest Hollings, also opposed the Constitution.)

Shame on them.

## O SAY CAN YOU SÍ?

When the U.S. national soccer team met Mexico at the Los Angeles Coliseum last month, the crowd was largely pro-Mexican. This wasn't surprising, given L.A.'s immigrant population and the popularity of soccer among Mexicans. What was surprising was the behavior of the crowd. They whistled, booed, shouted, and blew horns during the playing of the Star-Spangled Banner and later pelted American players with water, plastic bottles, garbage, beer cups. The Mexican consul general in L.A., Jose Angel Pescador Osuna, issued a special consular bulletin expressing disapproval of those who acted "inappropriately" during the national anthem. But then he suggested how to prevent a recurrence: Stop playing the Star-Spangled Banner during sporting events in the United States involving a team from another country. The consul did add that the other country's anthem shouldn't be played either. *Gracias* for the advice.

## THE RE-EDUCATION OF TONI MORRISON

Angela Davis—the Communist who is never called a Communist, despite running several times for vice president on the Communist party ticket—has published a book on the blues and "black feminism." The lead blurbist is Toni Morrison, winner of the Nobel prize, who says the book is "a serious re-education." Oops, poor choice of words. But at least Morrison's re-education was voluntary, and presumably not administered in a prison camp. Unlike the kind that Davis and her comrades always supported.

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# Casual

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## ERIC BREINDEL, 1955-1998

“Only on Yom Kippur does a shul get this crowded,” someone murmured to me as the sanctuary at the Park Avenue Synagogue began to fill on Monday, March 9. It was a lousy, stormy morning; my childhood fantasy that raindrops were God’s tears again seemed literally true.

In they poured, along with the rain—Moynihan and D’Amato, Pataki and Giuliani, Kissinger and Koch, Zuckerman and Murdoch, and a thousand other people, so many of them from the glittering precincts of New York society that you might have thought the occasion a charity auction.

It was not, alas. It was, instead, a funeral for a 42-year-old man whose sudden death violates all sense of justice. Because he had bested cancer only a few years earlier. Because he had not left his own issue to carry on his name after him. Because he had predeceased his own beloved parents. And because it seemed, in the wake of his passing, that hundreds and hundreds of lives were going to be significantly poorer because he would no longer be a part of them.

Eric Breindel’s funeral took more than two hours—there was so much to talk about. Upon his death he was a senior official of News Corporation, the company that owns this magazine. It also publishes the *New York Post*, where Eric served as editorial-page editor for 11 years and as a weekly columnist until his death.

It was in the pages of the *Post* that Eric, who also wrote for THE WEEKLY STANDARD as well as the *New Republic* and *Commentary* and

many other publications, did his finest work. He was especially, and rightly, proud of the way he served as New York City’s conscience when, in 1991, he insisted that the murderous anti-Hasidic riots in Crown Heights were nothing less than an American pogrom.

Eric Breindel had a personal interest in pogroms, and not just because he was himself a believing Jew. His parents are both Holocaust survivors, a horrible truth that gave him an understandably voracious interest in the literature of totalitarianism and anti-Semitism. And though Nazism was long dead, there was an anti-Semitic totalitarian threat still loose upon the world—the Soviet Union. And so he dedicated himself to the extirpation of the Soviet Union.

Eric was not only an anti-Communist. He was also a conservative whose words helped guide the city he lived in to a better path. His efforts to open the public’s eyes to the evil in Crown Heights, together with his courageous advocacy of a lone Korean grocer in Brooklyn who found himself the object of a racist boycott, powerfully argued for ousting Mayor David Dinkins in favor of his 1993 challenger, Rudolph Giuliani.

Eric thus made a signal contribution to the unexpected salvation of New York City in the 1990s—and to its continuing raffishness when he helped save the *New York Post* from going under in ’93 by working some behind-the-scenes magic to restore ownership of the paper to Rupert Murdoch.

Murdoch delivered the opening eulogy Monday. He made a special point of talking about Eric’s

absolute, unshakable loyalty, a quality that was indispensable to Eric’s most extraordinary gift—the gift of his friendship. Personages not known for talking about such things in public dwelt in their eulogies on the love they felt for Eric—men like Henry Kissinger, Rudy Giuliani, Alfonse D’Amato. Robert Kennedy Jr., a friend since college despite their ideological differences, said that one of the first voices on his answering machine after the horrific death of his brother Michael a few months ago was Eric’s: “Tell me where to go, and what to do, and I will be there.”

Kennedy also noted Eric’s fierce intelligence, as focused as a laser beam—the smartest guy at Harvard, he said. Pat Moynihan, whose student Eric was at Harvard, said he had taught Eric for two years and had learned from him for 20.

By common consensus, the most powerful eulogy was one expressing anger at Eric’s untimely death. “I’m tempted to rant like Jeremiah or Job, to demand an accounting of God for breaking His promise and breaking our hearts by shortening Eric Breindel’s days upon this earth,” the eulogist said, his voice breaking with emotion. “But I will not give in to that temptation. . . . I will affirm my conviction that, in another sense, Eric’s days . . . will be lengthened . . . in the continued life of Israel and the Jewish people; the people of Eric’s father and mother, the people he devoted so much of his young life to defending—with all the bravery of his heart, with all the devotion of his soul, and with all the power of his mind and pen.”

These words were spoken by my father. That evening, we found ourselves, my father and I, at another event in town. He saw me and threw his arms around me. “On such a day,” he said, “one feels one should give one’s son a hug.”

JOHN PODHORETZ

# Correspondence

## NO LICENSE FOR RABKIN

While generally favorable, Jeremy Rabkin's review of David Lowenthal's *No Liberty for License* failed to grasp the heart of the book ("Licensing Liberty," March 9). By elevating those elements of it that are most shocking to contemporary sensibilities while neglecting the logic of the book, Rabkin ends up presenting the author as "an impolitic and unpolitical man." A more careful reading of the book would surely change this presumption.

For instance, Rabkin suggests that Part II ("Does the First Amendment Protect Obscenity?") is of central importance to the author because he placed it centrally in the book, and the gist of the review is skewed accordingly. But Lowenthal explains the ordering of his tri-partite book explicitly: "I should explain why the religious part of the First Amendment, which opens it, is made the third topic instead of the first here. This is because the harm done by constitutional misinterpretation regarding revolutionary groups and obscenity is even more extensive and urgently dangerous than the harm done in the area of religion." The order of topics in the book is dictated by the severity of the danger each presents to our country. Not seeing this, Rabkin focuses instead on the issue of obscenity with the result that the author is presented more as a moralist motivated by indignation than as a scholar guided by reason. Though Rabkin accurately explicates the title of the book, he fails to address its subtitle: *The Forgotten Logic of the First Amendment*, a subject Lowenthal goes into in great depth.

Another consequence of Rabkin's false belief that obscenity is the core of Lowenthal's concerns is his reiteration of the phrase "Lowenthal demands . . ." This suggests that the author has presented more a jeremiad than a cogent analysis of the faulty logic at work in the Supreme Court. Lowenthal does not "want to ban." He simply suggests that the states be free to exercise their rights in these matters without the heavy hand of the Supreme Court forcibly guiding all action.

That Lowenthal comes across as impolitic and unpolitical is due not solely to Rabkin's misreading of the

book. Lowenthal has clearly seen into the depths of our depravity and has just as clearly exposed this to us. That we might recoil and consider any large-scale changes to be impossible says more about us than about the author; surely it is to be considered that the authors of our present condition held no such scruples in moving us so quickly into the state in which we now find ourselves. Working piecemeal toward certain limited ends may be justified in saner times. Perhaps now it is merely fiddling while Rome burns.

JAMES A. NEDVED  
FRAMINGHAM, MA



## NO CLASS TOO SMALL

In "The Elixir of Class Size" (March 9), Chester Finn and Michael Petrilli have the problems of class size theoretically nailed down, but no one can really get inside the myth of class size like a local school-board member. Condemned by my election to the board of education to begin living morning to night with the idea of ever-more-shrinkable class sizes, I have come to the conclusion that history will award this century's first-place award for snake-oil sales to the teacher unions for brainwashing almost every parent into believing that public school quality is determined by how small classes are. Never mind inclusion, teacher style, curriculum, or even how many VCRs and PCs are in the classroom; even access to the mind-expanding magic of

the Internet pales in importance when placed up against lowering class size.

Just imagine the public school of 2008, a warren of 100 or so fiber optically connected classrooms housing six laptop-wielding students, seated in a circle and thinking critically about federal control of the tobacco industry as the teacher-coach nods off behind the video equipment. Actually, vigilant community members used to spend lots of time gathering a dossier of my extremist views on basic curriculum, traditional instruction, and teacher accountability (in case I ever thought seriously about going for a second term). Now their jobs have been made much easier; they just keep the one list: the number of times I suggest there might be something worth spending school taxes on besides lowering class sizes.

Sadly, it's getting harder and harder to fight off the invasion of the federal government into our local public schools, and our battery-energized school boards have only themselves to thank for it. Local control of schools is an illusion in 1998 because the National Education Association is running the show, and because Americans with enough chutzpah to say no have become an endangered species.

EVA SOROCK  
WILMETTE, IL

## SANDY HUME

I was with great sadness that I read the article by Christopher Caldwell on Sandy Hume (Casual, March 9). Like Caldwell I will greatly miss Sandy. I did not have the honor of knowing him personally, but I felt that I came to know him via the television. Seeing him on Fox and C-SPAN with his easy manner and quick smile, I felt like he was an old friend.

RUTH B. WILSON  
SUMMERTON, SC

THE WEEKLY STANDARD welcomes letters to the editor. Letters will be edited for length and clarity and must include the writer's name, address, and phone number. All letters should be addressed: Correspondence Editor THE WEEKLY STANDARD 1150 17th St., NW Washington, DC 20036. You may also fax letters: (202) 293-4901.

# CAR-BOMBING STARR

To appreciate just how much dirt is being flung at independent counsel Kenneth Starr by the White House and its spin-agents, you must first learn a few things about cars and trucks.

One: Cars and trucks run on gasoline. Two: When cars and trucks are involved in horrific accidents, the gasoline sometimes spills and then ignites. Three: The nation's army of trial lawyers, auto tort division, regards any such accident as a welcome opportunity to sue the vehicle's manufacturer for a gigantic sum of money. And four: Those lawyers will stop at nothing to destroy anyone who stands between them and their contingency fees.

Which is where Ken Starr comes in.

On May 5, 1990, brothers Mark and Steve Cameron were heading south in a 1977 Chevrolet pickup on Highway K99 just outside of Summerfield, Kansas. A 1976 Ford Torino was heading north on the same road. The two vehicles collided at what the Camerons' own expert witness would later estimate to be a combined speed of no less than 99—and perhaps as high as 122—miles per hour. As you might expect, both vehicles were totaled. The wrecked Chevy pickup caught fire. Steve Cameron was so badly burned that he eventually lost his right arm.

Though the Camerons had been lifelong residents of Kansas, in April 1993 they suddenly moved to Greenville, South Carolina. How come? Well, "job opportunities," Mark Cameron would testify in a deposition a few months later. And "the weather." And "NASCAR racing. . . . It's kind of a racing country down here" and "I'm interested in that sort of thing." Any other reason? "I don't know. Looks like a good place." Also, "To be closer to our attorneys."

Attorneys back in Kansas were useless to the Camerons, you see; that jurisdiction's statute of limitations for product liability had expired in 1992. But the litigation window remained open in South Carolina, which, as an added attraction, imposes no limit on punitive-damage awards by juries. So the Camerons packed a few days' worth of clothes and "bathroom items," drove to Greenville, and—in their new "home

state"—immediately sued General Motors for having sold them the Chevy they'd crashed four years earlier. Representing the Camerons in this action were a local tort lawyer, J. Kendall Few, and James Butler Jr. of Atlanta, who had just won a highly publicized \$105 million verdict against GM in a Georgia truck-fire case.

Few and Butler are men with a theory. The theory is that car and truck fires are not an inevitable risk of driving but a correctable design flaw—and that for 25 years GM has deliberately declined to fix the problem because it is cheaper simply to pay off the occasional victim. It's a sensational charge, and it makes for excellent courtroom drama. But it rests almost entirely on a crude, two-page "value analysis" produced under unclear circumstances by a junior Oldsmobile engineer in 1973. The so-called "Ivey memo" assumed the existence of a "non-flammable fuel" and then appeared to conclude that preventing fire fatalities would be "worth" 20 cents less to GM per automobile than allowing them to continue.

Of course, there is no such thing as a "non-flammable fuel" for automobiles. Undeterred by the logic of science, however, tort lawyers like Few and Butler have been arguing for years and years, in case after case, that the purported spirit of the Ivey memo represented—and still represents—official GM policy. And they have used that memo to justify multi-thousand-page document searches through the GM archives for corroborating evidence that has never emerged. In the Cameron case, Few and Butler were lucky to draw Judge G. Ross Anderson Jr., a salty former plaintiffs' attorney given to public boasts about how much he enjoys goring corporate defendants. Judge Anderson granted Few and Butler's demand that GM turn over a series of Ivey-related papers prepared by the company's lawyers during previous litigation.

Okay, what does the Cameron case, up to this point in the story, have to do with Ken Starr? Nothing whatsoever. Starr is not a trial lawyer. Until Judge Anderson's "discovery" rulings, Starr had never met any of the principals in the Cameron litigation or read most

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of the documents involved—and he still hasn't.

But Starr is an appellate lawyer, and GM is one of his clients, and Starr did take a handful of Judge Anderson's discovery rulings to the Fourth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. The Fourth Circuit stayed those rulings as blatant violations of attorney-client privilege and essentially ordered Anderson off the case for his intemperate out-of-court pronouncements. Then, after a year's exhaustive review of the Few-Butler conspiracy theory and all relevant documents, the Fourth Circuit again agreed with Starr and overturned the discovery rulings of Anderson's replacement, Judge Charles H. Haden II. The Cameron case was settled without the sought-for grand prize: a fat punitive-damage award.

Also in 1994, incidentally, Starr won a GM appeal overturning James Butler's most famous grand prize, the \$105 million Georgia truck-fire verdict. And because during subsequent proceedings in Georgia Butler used Cameron-case material that the Fourth Circuit had ordered stricken from the record, Butler was held in contempt and personally fined \$190,000. Messrs. Butler and Few, it's safe to say, do not like Ken Starr very much. He has cost them a lot of money.

So flash forward to *Larry King Live* on February 23, 1998, when for the first time somebody publicly connected the Cameron case with Ken Starr's duties as independent counsel investigating Bill Clinton's misadventures. That somebody was James Carville, who waved around on camera, without explanation, a piece of paper that he said "indicates Mr. Starr may be part of covering up some documents in a GM case down in South Carolina."

It seems that a few days earlier, the trial judge in another GM fuel-fed-fire lawsuit, this one in Florida, had released an Ivey-related document. That document had never been subject to a ruling in the Cameron litigation. And that document—a GM lawyer's report on a 1981 interview with Mr. Ivey—doesn't prove very much at all to anyone who bothers to read it carefully. But reading things carefully has never been James Carville's strong suit, and so the new piece of "evidence" was enough for him to declare Starr guilty of "encouraging perjury in the General Motors case when a tank blew up and killed a child."

Where did Carville get this outrageous idea? And how did he make the outlandish connection between Starr's South Carolina work in 1994 and this year's Florida litigation? One can venture a pretty good guess. Hours after the Florida Ivey material was entered into the trial record, an outfit called Ralph Hoar & Associates had that material up on its World Wide Web site. Ralph Hoar is an auto-safety expert who does research for plaintiffs' attorneys in product-liability litigation. He did some work for his friend

Kendall Few on the Cameron case, and he is now doing work on the Florida case.

Hoar is an amiable, honest-sounding fellow, and he convincingly insists that he doesn't know how the Clinton clique learned about the new document: "I don't know Carville." But Ralph Hoar doesn't *have* to know Carville. Hoar reports that beginning February 23, the date of Carville's *Larry King* appearance, his company's Web site began tracking a flurry of unexpected visits from computers ending in the domain designation "eop.gov"—which stands for "executive office of the president," or, in the vernacular, the West Wing of Bill Clinton's White House.

Kendall Few, for his part, claims to have had no recent contact with anyone in Clinton's ambit and denies caring whether a GM controversy surrounding Ken Starr might help the president survive the Monica Lewinsky scandal. But Few also worries, in writing, about how "Susan MacDougall [sic] languishes in shackles in the bowels of some California federal prison" and how "Monica Lewinski's [sic] mother was publicly humiliated" before Starr's grand jury. And on March 1, Few asked the U.S. attorney for South Carolina to convene a grand jury to investigate whether Ken Starr had feloniously obstructed justice by suppressing evidence of GM perjury in the Cameron case.

On March 2, this U.S. attorney, a Clinton appointee, agreed to look into the matter. On March 3, his superiors in Washington at the Department of Justice, sight unseen, took the case away from him and announced that *they'd* look into the matter—notwithstanding the fact that a three-judge federal appellate panel already has looked into it, in 1994, and concluded it amounts to nothing. On March 4, employees at the White House, whose salaries are paid with public money, spent the day blast-faxing "information" about the Cameron case to national reporters, which made it a "legitimate" story. You have to sort through mountains of court records to figure out that the story is actually unmitigated baloney, and who has time for that?

Pretty neat, huh? Vengeful trial lawyers to the World Wide Web to James Carville and the White House to the big-time newspapers and television networks, where it is reported that the United States Department of Justice is conducting an inquiry into whether Kenneth Starr is a criminal. How is it even remotely appropriate for taxpayer dollars to be spent this way, in an effort to undermine a court- and Justice Department-sanctioned independent-counsel investigation?

Can it really be true that William Jefferson Clinton remains, effectively, above the law? And why do so few people seem upset about it?

—David Tell, for the Editors

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# MONICA'S THERAPIST SPEAKS

by Tucker Carlson

**M**ONICA LEWINSKY'S THERAPIST is on the phone from Los Angeles explaining how her patient wound up having an affair with Bill Clinton. Starting work as an intern at the White House, says Irene Kassorla, a Hollywood psychologist who has counseled Lewinsky, is "like your first day of kindergarten. Can you imagine being this little kid in kindergarten and there's this nice daddy there? Your mommy has left you, she's gone home and told you to be brave. There are 250 of you in the class, and all of a sudden the biggest daddy in the place takes you by the hand and shows you how to color, and shows you how to play with the clay, and shows you how to get on the tricycle, and when you fall he picks you up. I mean, it's pretty nice."

In fact, says Kassorla, who is a longtime sex therapist, Clinton the paternal kindergarten teacher was almost irresistible: "What intern in what country wouldn't if the top guy said, 'You're adorable, you're wonderful?' It's so seductive, it's so delicious to have a Big Daddy look at you. And then the thing develops. At first you think maybe he just wants to talk to you or something. It develops." Kassorla says that she, a married woman in her mid-60s, can empathize with Lewinsky's attraction to the president. "I think he's cute," says Kassorla enthusiastically. "But if he and I did it, we'd have to have penetration. I'd insist."

Kassorla will not disclose whether she gave similar advice to Monica Lewinsky. Nor will she say when the two last spoke. (An acquaintance of Lewinsky's says that her counseling sessions with Kassorla began in high school and continued, over the phone, until as recently as several months ago.) But talk to Monica Lewinsky's shrink for a while and what has happened to Lewinsky begins to make a lot more sense.

Irene Kassorla first came to national attention in 1980, when she published a sex manual entitled *Nice Girls Do*. Based partly on Kassorla's own experiences with her boyfriend (who was then the west coast editor of *Penthouse* magazine), *Nice Girls Do* promised to take readers "beyond orgasm, beyond sexual gratification, and into sexual delight whenever you wish." It was not a book for beginners. In order to reach the

"untamable Maxi Orgasm" (comparable in intensity to a grand mal seizure), Dr. Kassorla prescribed gymnastic couplings like the Bass Fiddle Position, as well as a grueling regimen of genital exercises. "Sex is a skill that has to be learned, practiced and honed to precision," she wrote, and many book buyers seemed to agree. *Nice Girls Do* spent weeks on the bestseller lists, eventually selling more than 3 million copies.

By the mid-'80s, Kassorla had become something of a celebrity in Los Angeles. Billing herself as the "Shrink to the Stars," she hosted a radio call-in show, made regular appearances on *Donahue*, and struck up a friendship with Oprah Winfrey. In 1985, Kassorla helped develop her own television special, *99 Ways to Attract a Man*. "I'm the world's best-known psychologist," she told a reporter at the time. In 1988, Kassorla took time from her busy schedule of media appearances to marry Norman Friedmann, a wealthy computer executive. These days Kassorla lives, as she puts it, "like a queen," in a huge estate, right near [Hugh] Hefner. It's a palace, nestled between Beverly Hills and Bel Air."

Kassorla could have retired from her practice years ago, but she continues to work as a therapist, mostly, she says, because she's so good at it. "I'm the most amazing shrink," she explains. "I'm the strongest, most effective shrink you ever saw. I know it. I

have a gift. People kiss my hand sometimes when I go on the street. They say, 'Oh, you've saved my life.' The secret to successful lifesaving, Kassorla says, is her rapport with clients. "I have Kleenex in every room of my house because my patients come in here and they really spill their everything to me."

At some point, one of those who spilled her everything to Kassorla was a now-famous pudgy girl from Brentwood. Kassorla is both proud of her connection to Lewinsky and fearful that it will disrupt her life. "This is my nightmare, that Ken Starr will find some loophole or something and come get me talking," Kassorla says, sounding worried. "I have a cushy life. I live in a bloody mansion here. I got a husband who thinks I'm 14. And if you think I want to be under Starr's glance or pressure, or be in Washington when my patients need me. . . . My life would be over. I'd be in the *Enquirer* as the crazy shrink who crazed the crazy."

Don't expect to see Kassorla in a grand-jury room

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soon. A recent Supreme Court decision shields therapists from testifying about their clients under most circumstances. Nor is Monica Lewinsky likely to give Kassorla permission to talk to the independent counsel. "Of course not," snorts William Ginsburg, Lewinsky's lawyer. "And I don't think that even Mr. Starr would have the chutzpah to subpoena a physician or psychologist." Ginsburg is probably right, and that may turn out to be a shame for his client. "If I talked," says Irene Kassorla, "it would help Monica."

No doubt it would. Kassorla obviously has affection for Lewinsky, who she believes is being forced to "pick up the tab" for the White House sex scandal. So far, Kassorla says, her patient has been mischaracterized by almost everyone. "Her parents," says Kassorla, "what they say I would never trust. They'll say something idyllic: 'She was a wonderful baby, I was a wonderful father. We used to play in the sand, blah, blah, blah.' Who knows what they'll say? And you know something? They won't even mean it. And it won't be true." Lewinsky's mother, Kassorla adds, "is a banana."

As for the suggestion that Lewinsky merely imagined her sexual relationship with Clinton, Kassorla all but scoffs. "She would have to be very sick to fantasize to that degree," says the therapist. "And if she's very sick, how do you get a job as an intern, how do you keep your job as an intern, how do you get to the Pentagon? It doesn't hold. Could she function in the White House as a person who was schizophrenic?"

In fact, says Kassorla, Lewinsky's relationship with the president was not as unnatural as it may now seem. "You're an intern in the most important

home in the world, and you are fortunate enough to be near the Big Daddy there," she says. "It's a very well-established habit that you listen to the boss, that you believe the boss, that you trust the boss." If the president asks for sex, Kassorla argues, what employee could refuse? "Just because you get older doesn't mean that you can turn off the habit you have of believing the authority or the wise boss or the wise daddy." Ken Starr, Kassorla seems certain, must have figured this out already. The independent counsel, she says, "is on the right trail."

At this point, Kassorla remains ambivalent about her connection to Monica Lewinsky. While generally enthusiastic about going on television ("I love it, I love it"), Kassorla has said little publicly about Lewinsky since the story broke in January. During her few talk-show appearances since, the normally self-revealing therapist has never mentioned that she knows Lewinsky. "My lawyer told me to say, 'I can neither confirm nor deny any association with any patient,'" Kassorla explains. And even if she could reveal more about what Lewinsky told her, Kassorla isn't sure she would want to. "I am not interested in impeaching the president," she says. "I can just see it in the history books: 'This five-foot-two doll from Los Angeles, very nicely trained, brilliant woman, took down Bill Clinton.' I think he's okay."

Then again, there's always the possibility things might still change. "I have stories in my little head," confides Kassorla, "that would make your ears fall off."

*Tucker Carlson is a staff writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.*

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## ADRIFT IN THE GULF

by John R. Bolton

**S**ince the Baghdad deal between Saddam Hussein and U.N. secretary general Kofi Annan on February 23, analysts have waited to see how Iraq would treat U.N. weapons-inspection teams. The early results are in, and, unsurprisingly, the Iraqis have posed no major obstacles to inspectors. At least until some American military forces are withdrawn from the region or the United Nations stumbles onto a research, storage, or production site for weapons of mass destruction, the Iraqis will, on the surface, appear to comply with the deal.

The real action in the last three weeks, however,

has been on the political and diplomatic fronts. There, in a shift little noticed in the United States, the initiative has moved away from Washington and toward those who oppose the use of force against Iraq, in particular the United Nations. Annan drove this point home on March 8 when he asserted, on the strength of nothing but his own opinion, that the United States "would be required" to consult with the Security Council before using force against Iraq. Just three days later, President Clinton bent his knee by saying, "Of course we would consult. It would be unthinkable that we wouldn't." Annan has also said unambiguously, "We should look down the horizon to post-crisis Iraq and see where we go from here."

As his confident statements demonstrate, Annan

is now a leading international player in the Persian Gulf. He has clear ideas about the outcome he wants, is moving vigorously to implement them, and is riding a wave of international acclaim unprecedented for a secretary general since Dag Hammarskjold. The other principal player, President Clinton, to this day has not clearly defined his objectives in the Gulf. Increasingly distracted by his personal political problems, he has reverted to the inattention to foreign policy characteristic of his administration. It does not bode well for the United States that the president's ability to direct even his inadequate policy of containment is slipping from his hands. Already, the administration has moved from reluctantly accepting the Baghdad deal to embracing it.

Annan has quickly consolidated his position. First he named undersecretary-general Jayantha Dhanapala to superintend the diplomats who will accompany the U.N. inspectors to the Iraqi "presidential sites." A former Sri Lankan ambassador to the United States, Dhanapala is an expert in international arms control and experienced in U.N. diplomacy. Then Annan appointed Prakash Shah, former Indian ambassador to the U.N., his special representative to Iraq, serving as his "eyes and ears." In an interview with the *Financial Times*, Annan characterized his appointment of Shah as filling a "major void," adding that "until now we were dealing with [Iraq] as if the relationship was concerned only with disarmament and humanitarian assistance and nothing in between."

Dhanapala and Shah are both bright, highly competent, and energetic diplomats steeped in the U.N. culture. They are self-starters, who would not have accepted these new responsibilities—nor would Annan have chosen them—if they were content sim-

ply to be new potted plants on the U.N.'s shelves. To the contrary, these diplomats form the core of a new Annan team that could tip the balance of initiative not only away from the United States but even away from the Security Council.

The Russians, meanwhile, have made their own play, proposing four new deputy chairmen for Richard Butler, head of UNSCOM, the U.N.'s weapons-monitoring operation in Iraq. These new deputy chairmen would come from the four permanent-member countries on the council. Until now, the sole deputy chairman has been an American. Ever-helpful France convinced the Russians to back down to two deputy chairmen, but Moscow is asserting vigorously that the new slot should be filled by a Russian.

Whether or not the Russian play succeeds, the appointment of Dhanapala and Shah has accomplished several objectives that almost certainly amount to setbacks for the United States. First, UNSCOM chairman Richard Butler and his American deputy have been effectively "layered": Dhanapala's diplomats have been inserted into UNSCOM as watchers for the U.N. Secretariat (and probably for Iraq), and Shah's presence gives the Iraqis another channel of communication to the secretary general when they don't want to go through Butler (which is almost always). This may seriously constrain U.N. inspectors in the coming critical months—or even silence what has been the relatively aggressive (if not

always successful) voice of UNSCOM in U.N. deliberations.

Second, Annan's complaint about the U.N.'s inadequate relationship with Iraq reflects dissatisfaction with the lack of dialogue on the remaining economic sanctions. Now, with Shah's appointment, the Secretariat has a direct channel to Saddam Hussein.



**Kofi Annan**

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Indeed, Annan himself said of the oil-for-food program, "The fact that [the Iraqis] don't manage it themselves and that we treat them like babies really offends them. They are very disciplined, very hard workers. In fact, once sanctions are lifted they could do it much better than anybody can do it for them." One of his aides, Shashi Tharoor, even while reciting the need to comply with Security Council resolutions, said expressly that Annan "has signaled that the international community must look to a time beyond sanctions when Iraq could join the family of nations." Pressure on the United States to agree to lifting of all economic sanctions will not only grow, but will have Clinton's acquiescence.

Disturbing as these portents are, they pale beside what appears to be the secretary general's larger vision of dealing with "post-crisis Iraq." He has coupled his hope for a "new Iraq" with his perception that "Iran is trying to come out and deal with its neighbors and the outside world," and he has joined both with the idea of finally resolving the Arab-Israeli dispute. Annan notes, "We have too many trouble spots that feed off each other and reinforce each other." A *Financial Times* headline captured this theme: "Iraqi deal is key to broader Mideast solution, says Annan." Coincidentally, Israel's new willingness more fully to embrace Resolution 425, dealing with southern Lebanon, may further feed the enthusiasm of those who seek a larger U.N. role in the Arab-Israeli dispute.

During the recent period of intensive U.N. activity, the Clinton administration has been consumed with the Lewinsky affair, with no relief in sight. Iraq has dropped off Madeleine Albright's public agenda, to be replaced by what are for her more comfortable fulminations against Serbia. (Given recent developments, one wonders whether her threats are taken any more seriously in Belgrade than in Baghdad.)

It now appears that we are in a standoff with Iraq during which American inattention will allow the U.N. Secretariat to get a firmer grip on the steering wheel of policy in the Persian Gulf and perhaps the Middle East generally. This amounts to yet another lost opportunity to make the case to the American people and the world for the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime. Moreover, the president's unprecedented concession to consult the Security Council before using force can only provide Saddam Hussein with additional safeguards and early warnings before he is truly in danger again. And these are but two of several reasons why even a bad slip by the Iraqis will not produce the automatic council support for military action that the administration so confidently predicted in embracing the Baghdad deal. We are drifting, and there is no shoreline in sight.

*John R. Bolton is the senior vice president of the American Enterprise Institute. In the Bush administration, he served as assistant secretary of state for international organizations.*

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## HELL'S A-BURNIN'

by Chris Vlasto

"**H**ELL'S A-BURNIN'." These were the last words Jim McDougal left on my answering machine on the morning of January 22, 1998. America was about to wake up to the Monica Lewinsky story, but somehow Jim McDougal knew about it first and wanted to spin. Or just wanted to talk. Even from a jail cell, McDougal was only a collect call away from a quote.

I first met McDougal, who died last week in prison at age 57, long before he became a familiar figure on national TV, tipping his trademark Panama hat to the cameras outside the courthouse in Little Rock. The onetime business partner of the Clintons was a lonely man then, who lived in a trailer, his arteries clogged, his mother dead, millions squandered, and his former friend sitting in the Oval Office. He was always ready

with a quip and full of color and wit, but he was a beaten man, who felt betrayed by his friend Bill Clinton.

As I asked Jim questions about the arcane land deal known as Whitewater, he told me to take out my wallet. He pulled out my credit cards and asked me what charges I had made the month before. I was confused. He said, "You can't remember financial transactions you made a month ago, and now you're asking me about a transaction I did more than 10 years past." Not pausing for a breath he added, "You know this story is going to be bigger than Watergate."

That was Jim McDougal, combative and intriguing, always keeping reporters on their toes. He would tell just enough to keep you interested and to keep you coming back. Was it a game? Was he stonewalling? Or was he just a lonely man who liked the company of reporters?

I had hundreds of conversations with Jim McDou-

gal over the last five years, before and after he went to jail for fraud and became a key prosecution witness in the Whitewater investigation. He was never boring.

Sure, he went in and out of manic rage. Sure, some days he defended the Clintons and other times he attacked them with venom. Yes, he did become a media darling in love with his own image. During his trial, he even bought a book of Bartlett's Quotations because he was concerned that his sound bites were getting stale.

But then there was the other side of Jim McDougal. Underneath all the bravado was a frightened man. On the eve of his trial, we sat in his hotel room, and he began to cry. He said, "I don't want to go to jail. All I did was help a friend, and now I'm going to the slammer and he's going to win reelection."

He cried once again after he made his deal with Kenneth Starr. He said, "I never thought of myself as a

rat, but now I am; I don't want to die in jail." But after gathering himself, he said: "You tell Ted Koppel, I am Billy Clinton's Brutus."

I last saw Jim McDougal over Thanksgiving in jail. He seemed reborn. He was working on a memoir called "Arkansas Mischief." He couldn't wait for his book tour. He told me he was a cult figure among the inmates and that he had befriended the harder cons by volunteering for garbage duty. That was Jim McDougal—always working an angle.

Whitewater was out of the headlines during this visit, but I asked him the same question I had asked him a thousand times: "Do you think this story is over?" He said, "Chris, what have I told you? This is going to be bigger than Watergate.

"Hell's a-burnin'."

*Chris Vlasto is an investigative producer for ABC News.*



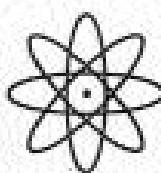
Chas Fagan

**Jim McDougal**

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# CLINTON'S APOLOGIST

## *The Bonfire of David Brock's Vanity*

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By Eric Felten

Just nine months ago, David Brock was promoting an article he had written for *Esquire*, in which he ostentatiously renounced his status as "Right-Wing Hit Man." Brock was the star investigative reporter for the *American Spectator*. He had written the huge 1993 article on "Troopergate"—17,000 words of salacious stories about Bill Clinton as told by the Arkansas state troopers who witnessed them. Before that, he had published the bestselling *The Real Anita Hill*, defending Supreme Court justice Clarence Thomas—a book that made Brock a hero to many conservatives and a villain to the Left. Now he was turning his back on that phase of his career, and getting lots of TV airtime in the process. But Brock still defended his earlier work: "My journalism was good journalism," he told the *Today* show's Matt Lauer. "It was accurate and thorough."

Last week, Brock was all over the TV talk shows again, promoting a new *Esquire* article, in which he ostentatiously apologizes to President Clinton for having written the Troopergate story. The trooper story mentioned a meeting in a hotel room between governor Clinton and a woman named "Paula," who would of course come forward in the article's aftermath to file her now famous sexual-harassment lawsuit against the president. Paula Jones's lawyers helped to unearth Monica Lewinsky. And so, as Brock sees it, by writing the Troopergate story, he personally is responsible for the Lewinsky affair, and he's really, really sorry about it. So sorry, in fact, that he now denounces his original Troopergate story as "bad journalism." This has caused a lot of confusion. The spectacle of a journalist publicly professing that his work is "good," and then less than a year later proclaiming that same work "bad," is unusual, to say the least.

Brock refused to be interviewed on the record for this story and would answer only unilluminating yes-and-no questions off the record. But in his many public appearances last week—on *Good Morning America*, on the *Today* show again, on CNN's *Morning News* and *Crossfire*, on *Rivera Live* and *Equal Time* and MSNBC's *Crisis in the White House*—he said that he is convinced

the motives of the Arkansas state troopers were bad (he called them "greedy" and "slimy"). And he's now convinced his own motives were just as suspect: "I wasn't hot for this story in the interest of good government or serious journalism," Brock writes in *Esquire*. "I wanted to pop [the president] right between the eyes."

But the one thing he doesn't seem to care about is the one thing a journalist *should* care about: the truth of the story. Brock professes complete and total ignorance about whether his Troopergate story was true. A perplexed Charlie Gibson on *Good Morning America* urged Brock to point out any one detail about Troopergate that he had gotten wrong. Though there were peripheral errors in Brock's story, ones that he could, and should have corrected—for example his lurid gossip about Hillary Clinton and Vince Foster—he didn't even try to set the record straight. He merely repeated that he could no longer "stand by the story."

Brock isn't sorry for getting the story wrong, but for getting the story at all: "I did kind of a cost-benefit analysis in my own mind about Troopergate and going down this path," Brock told Gibson, "and I really concluded that the costs outweigh the benefits." Once upon a time Brock wanted to hurt the president; now he wants to help the president—and neither impulse is a journalistic one.

The idea that David Brock could somehow have spared Bill Clinton his present grief is a self-aggrandizing fantasy. What about the many other journalists—serious, talented, self-respecting professionals—who have reported equally damaging stories about the president? In his *Esquire* article, Brock either ignores those other reporters, or insults them.

In fact, Brock was hardly alone in reporting on the Arkansas troopers. The *Los Angeles Times* had the story, too. And if Brock is as confused about the facts as he claims, he ought to talk to the two *L.A. Times* reporters who were competing with him, Bill Rempel and Douglas Frantz. Cliff Jackson—Clinton's old friend turned nemesis—had brought the troopers to Rempel and Frantz first, but it was taking them a long

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Eric Felten is a writer in Washington, D.C.

time to produce the story. Their editors were understandably leery of the subject and kept putting up roadblocks. But more important, Rempel and Frantz were doing the time-consuming work of *checking the story out*. To light a fire under the *Times*, Jackson introduced the troopers to Brock, correctly guessing that Brock would not waste time on independent corroboration. It was one of the best breaks the White House ever had—and they knew it.

The week before Brock's *American Spectator* article was to appear, Rempel and Frantz were ready to publish any day, poised to beat the *Spectator* into print. The two were in Washington trying to get a response from Clinton to the facts they had learned. And they were facts: When a trooper told of Clinton's calling a particular woman time and again on his cell phone, the *Times* team went and dug up the governor's phone records and found that Clinton had indeed made the calls. Rempel and Frantz waited day after day in their rooms at the Embassy Suites Hotel, while the White House stalled. Every day they were promised an answer to their questions, if only they would wait.

Over the weekend, the *Times* team learned why the Clintonites had gone into a four-corners defense: The notorious Clinton fixer Betsey Wright triumphantly delivered to their hotel an advance copy of Brock's *Spectator* article. It seems that Brock's apology to the president wasn't the first time the hit-man was a useful idiot for the Clintons.

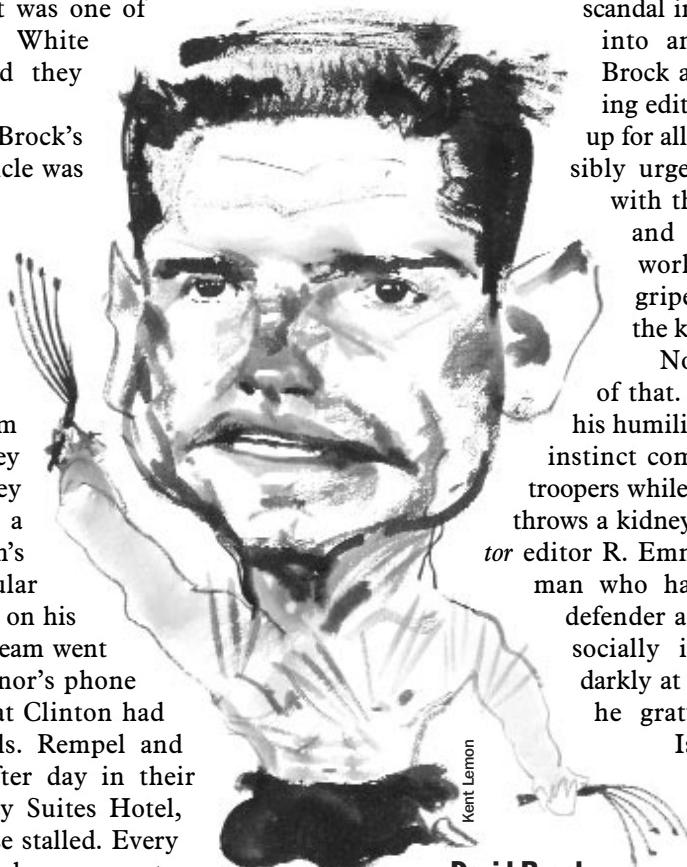
Compared with the trooper exposé in the *Times*, Brock's article was sloppy, self-important, and meandering. "Brock wouldn't have caught a typo," says Rempel. "This was a story that only had value if it wasn't tainted." The worst of it, though, is that Brock now accuses the troopers of wanting to cash in. "The troopers didn't make money by coming forward," Rempel says. "It only brought them infamy and poverty." It is a measure of Brock's newfound ethics that he glibly dumps on the ruined men who made

his fortune. "Brock's self-serving mea culpa is a hypocritical outrage," Rempel says.

Those who have known Brock—including me—think he is an odd candidate to become a poster boy for journalistic ethics. In my cub-reporter days, Brock was for a short time my editor at *Insight* magazine. I remember working on a campaign-finance scandal in 1990 and taking the story into an editorial meeting with Brock and the magazine's managing editor: Brock wanted to play it up for all it was worth; our boss sensibly urged caution and extra care with the facts. After the meeting and back in Brock's office to work the piece over, Brock griped that the editor "lacked the killer instinct."

Nobody ever accused Brock of that. Even now, in the thick of his humility and contrition, the killer instinct comes through. He kicks the troopers while they are down and out; he throws a kidney punch at *American Spectator* editor R. Emmett Tyrrell, betraying the man who has been his most dogged defender and patron but who is now socially inconvenient; he guesses darkly at Paula Jones's motives; and he gratuitously trashes Michael Isikoff, the *Newsweek* reporter who was the first journalist to hear the Monica tapes. He even, by way of apologizing to Bill Clinton,

worries that "you'll be the first president impeached for orchestrating a coverup of a b—j—." Some apology.



David Brock

In the glaring absence of any coherent journalistic principle to explain Brock's 180-degree turn, the obvious question is, What gives? The writer's change of heart may be in large part a change of the heart. Since becoming a celebrity, Brock has moved in a wider social circle than most conservative journalists. No doubt many of his new friends gave him grief for his right-wing views. Certainly Neel Lattimore must have. Lattimore, until recently the spokesman for Hillary Rodham Clinton, struck up a friendship with Brock about a year ago, and since then they've become good friends. Brock denies, however, that his

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acquaintance with Lattimore is in any way responsible for his newly solicitous attitude toward the Clintons.

If not, then certainly other impulses are at work, among them one revealed by Brock's nasty swipe at Isikoff—envy. After the Troopergate story, Brock devoted three years of his life to rooting out Clinton sex scandals and came up with zilch, while his mainstream rival, Isikoff, broke new ground in the Paula Jones story, uncovered the story of Kathleen Willey's groping by the president, and with his reporting on Linda Tripp's tapes of Monica Lewinsky earned the fame Brock so coveted. Isikoff's appearance on the Letterman show must have been particularly galling.

But as much as Brock's turnaround can be explained as a heady mix of new friendships and old animosities, the overriding reason for his transformation appears to be a more calculating one: He needs the money that his newfound celebrity may bring.

The key moment came in 1996 when Brock's political biography of the first lady, *The Seduction of Hillary Rodham*, hit bookstore shelves . . . and stubbornly stayed on them, unsold. From the get-go, Brock said he had planned to vivisect Mrs. Clinton: "My frank intention was to butcher my prey." When he inked the book contract in early 1995, he was so confident of his own muckraking skills that he agreed to an impossible deadline for the book: In 12 short months he would research, report, and write the whole thing. The crash schedule was cash-driven. The Free Press expected to make a killing if they could just get Brock's devastating portrait of Hillary into stores before the '96 elections. The publishers expected to make such a packet, in fact, that they paid Brock a staggering \$1 million advance.

Brock put a small army of young research assistants to work. They ran up huge Nexis bills at the *American Spectator*; they scoured Arkansas newspaper morgues; they retrieved mountains of transcripts from congressional hearings and bales of documents from Hillary's health-care task force. If some piece of paper had Hillary's name on it, Brock had it in his files. But as the months wore on, that was all he had.

Brock craved interviews with those who could tell him Hillary's secrets, but nobody would talk to him. He shouldn't have been surprised. The job would have been tough enough for any reporter. But Brock was at an added, disastrous disadvantage. The Anita

Hill book made him the man most hated by the Left. No one even remotely in the first lady's orbit would have anything to do with him, let alone dish him the good stuff. "He was shut out of the sources he desperately needed to make the book," says one friend. "It bothered him terribly. He knew the book wasn't adequate."

It was a tough realization for Brock. The *Washington Post* had once labeled him "the Bob Woodward of the Right," and it was a title he reveled in. Brock even bragged to friends that he had once run into Woodward on the streets of Georgetown and was told by the great man that he was "the only respectable one at the *Spectator*." But the comparison set the bar high: Woodward always got spectacular access at the highest levels—and Brock had none.

As the deadline loomed, Brock was trapped. He couldn't very well turn in a manuscript excoriating Hillary if he didn't have the goods. Nor could he return the Croesian book advance—it had already gone into his growing real-estate holdings. With the profits from the Anita Hill book, Brock had bought a grand, three-story townhouse in Georgetown, an imposing red-brick job with a desirable N Street address. Price-tag: \$550,000. With

the fat advance for the Hillary book, he bought an extravagant beach house on the Delaware coast. Price-tag: \$455,000. He had to turn in a manuscript. Any manuscript. So he got an extension from the Free Press and tried to figure out what sort of book to write with the time he had left.

The way Brock tells it, he merely followed the facts where they led. "To the extent that I was programmed to believe the worst of Hillary," Brock wrote in his first *Esquire* piece, "the far more nuanced picture I was piecing together knocked me off my foundations." This version of events provides Brock with a convenient and comforting explanation for why his book became a literary Edsel: Conservatives didn't want the truth about Hillary, they only wanted dirt; when he refused to make up lies about the first lady, conservatives trashed his book and shunned him socially; he was a victim of the latent neo-Stalinism of the Right, a martyr to Truth. To illustrate that point, *Esquire* unsubtly photographed Brock lashed to a tree, his bodice torn, one nipple exposed *just so*, and up to his ankles in kindling.

But if Brock was to be burned at the stake, it was a bonfire of his own vanity. When it dawned on him

## THE COMPARISON TO BOB WOODWARD SET THE BAR HIGH: WOODWARD ALWAYS GOT SPECTACULAR ACCESS AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS—AND BROCK HAD NONE.

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that the hit he had promised wasn't going to materialize, Brock only had a few months to retool his operation for the new version of the book. How could that possibly be enough time? No one who is serious about political biography would think of doing such a project in the space of a year, let alone the few months that Brock had to work with. Brock's first prideful error had been to think that he—the genius of Troopergate! the scourge of Anita Hill!—could bring down Hillary with a year's worth of digging. With both his previous triumphs, Brock had been handed all he needed to do his stories: Cliff Jackson brought him the troopers; Republicans from the Senate Judiciary Committee loaded him down with their boxes of opposition research on Anita Hill. This time, he was largely on his own. Brock's second error had been to think that, when the hit-piece fell apart, he could fake a serious biography on the fly.

There were reviewers on the left who dismissed the book out of hand as the work of a fascist cretin; there were reviewers on the right who, though they tried hard to like the book, wondered what Brock could have been thinking.

But there was one review that was undeniably devastating—Bob Woodward's in the *Washington Post*. "The problem is that as best I can tell, he has found no significant new source or documentation on a major incident or event to explain his theory on the Clintons," Woodward wrote. "Unable to advance the reporting on the first lady, Brock sets himself up as analyst and interpreter." You can hear it in Woodward's disappointed tone: *Thought that boy had talent. Guess I was wrong.*

No wonder Brock prattled on about the social snubs, some real, mostly imagined, he suffered at the hands of those nasty old conservatives. *G. Gordon Liddy wouldn't have me on his radio show! Grover Norquist called me names!* It may be childish—in a *Today* show interview, Matt

Lauer called Brock's complaints a "hurt-puppy routine"—but it's easier than facing up to Woodward's damning judgment.

**A**fter the Hillary disaster, there was little chance Brock would get any million-dollar advances in the future. The Free Press took such a bath on the book that many pointed to it as the reason for the turnover that ensued there. (Not long afterwards, both the imprint's publisher, Michael Jacobs, and the editor of the Free Press and Brock's champion, Adam Bellow, were out the door.) Not the sort of track record to get publishers to line up with their checkbooks.

Brock's other source of income was about to dry up as well. Once upon a time Brock was happy to milk his Troopergate triumph for cash. In 1994 he met with his bosses at the *American Spectator* to demand a sizable raise. He got it: Over the next three years Brock was paid half a million dollars, a sum almost unheard of for a reporter at a political magazine. But soon after

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he had a new pay scale at the *Spectator*, he signed his new book deal, thus launching a project that consumed all his time. He didn't take a leave of absence. In 1995 he wrote one article for the *Spectator*—a defense of his Anita Hill book. In 1996 he contributed one article to the *Spectator*—an excerpt from his Hillary book. In 1997 he stepped up the pace, turning out three pieces. That's five articles for \$500,000, making Brock arguably the highest-paid journalist in the history of political magazines. Off-camera after a TV appearance last year, Brock laughed to another journalist about how he was making half a million over three years for doing virtually nothing. Not surprisingly, there was massive resentment among the *Spectator*'s rank and file, who labored for modest salaries. He knew the gravy train couldn't last—and it didn't. The *Spectator* failed to renew his contract last fall.

With one friend over drinks last year, Brock agonized about his career options, saying, "I don't know whether I should abandon my conservative base—it's so lucrative." In the fall, Brock met another friend and

complained that he had spent most of his money on the houses in Georgetown and Delaware and the lease on his condo in Manhattan's West Village. Brock mused about how he wanted to make "real money" in the future.

Who knows whether the *Esquire* publicity will bring the desired riches? He has picked up a few choice assignments with the glossies, but most publications don't seem to be breaking his door down for copy. "I don't think I'll ever trust him," says one liberal editor in New York. But at least his new personal style did capture that elusive beast—a new book contract, albeit one with an advance in the six, rather than seven, figures. As if Brock hasn't bared his soul enough, the new book will be the tell-all memoirs of his life on the right. After that performance, he's sure to owe enough apologies to keep him in business indefinitely.

By his own account, David Brock is both a hypocrite and a lousy journalist. Who's to contradict him? ♦

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## GERALDO'S AMERICA (AND BILL CLINTON'S)

By Danielle Crittenden

Last week, I experienced my lowest moment since puberty: I found myself being lectured about truth, honor, and ethics by the gossip columnist for the *National Enquirer*. Actually, not lectured, but screamed at before a daytime TV audience. "You," the columnist shrieked, his portly body rising indignantly from his upholstered chair, "you are a *supercilious snob* who has been *looking down her nose* at everyone this whole program!" The audience applauded as I sank lower into my upholstered chair.

The program, this supercilious snob is embarrassed to admit, was *The Geraldo Rivera Show*. No, not the semi-respectable nighttime show on which *Newsweek*'s Howard Fineman appears; the daytime show. Don't ask how I found myself there on a panel of "experts" to discuss the Clinton scandals. Let's just say

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Danielle Crittenden is editor of *The Women's Quarterly*, published by the *Independent Women's Forum*.

I didn't know there was a daytime *Geraldo*, and the publicist who booked me on it will not be receiving his box of Christmas chocolates this year.

Alas, once you are ushered into the studio on one of these shows, there is no escape. You are hooked up to a microphone. The doors are sealed. The audience looks at you with the relish and anticipation of the Roman mobs who watched the Christians stumble into the Coliseum.

As "experts," we'd been brought in to view news clips from the scandal—Bill Clinton wagging his finger and denying sexual relations with "that woman"; Hillary Clinton standing by her man on the *Today* show; the presidential embrace of the beret-wearing Monica Lewinsky—and then "analyze" them. Did the Clintons look sincere? Did the president hug Miss Lewinsky the way he hugged every woman? My fellow "experts" included two female lawyers, one of whom believed you could tell a lot about people from their

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auras. There was also a “specialist in body language,” a Californian speech therapist who thought you could decode secret messages by playing recordings of speech backwards, a bubbly pop psychologist, and the *Enquirer*’s senior editor and gossip columnist, Michael Walker.

It quickly became clear that I was the only one in the studio who was scandalized by the president’s alleged behavior in the Oval Office. Every time Kenneth Starr appeared on the video monitors, there was low grumbling and hissing. Every time it was asserted that whatever the president did—or for that matter continued to do to hide it—was a matter of *privacy*, enthusiastic applause erupted. Pretty soon, I began to feel like the Limburger on a party cheese plate. The audience shook its head and rolled its eyes as I offered the usual platitudes about the importance of character in our leaders. Walker, waving his large mood ring at me dismissively, insisted nothing had been proved, and besides, it was that “scumbag” Ken Starr whose character we should really be worried about.

This is all par for the course in punditry these days: Bill Clinton is a victim, Hillary Clinton is a victim, Monica Lewinsky is a victim, Sidney Blumenthal is a martyr. It is only Ken Starr—and his “Attila the Hun” tactics, as Geraldo put it—whom we should deplore. I stuck to my increasingly stinky role as Limburger, growing more sullen by the moment, wondering to myself where on earth all those people who voted for Reagan went, when Walker suddenly went ballistic. We were discussing Monica Lewinsky’s mother and her appearance before the grand jury. Geraldo showed a clip of Marcia Lewis leaving the courthouse, looking distressed. Would Miss Crittenton, he asked, at least concede that Ms. Lewis was sincere in her distress?

Yes, I said, now thoroughly cranky, of course she was distressed. She *should* be distressed. After all, if it’s true that she egged her daughter on in an affair with

the president and then urged her to lie about it, she has done something awful and ought to be mortified. You can’t arrest parents for giving bad advice to their children, but they should certainly have to face the consequences—even if those consequences include being hauled before a grand jury. Walker was incredulous, as was—judging by the expressions on the audience’s faces and Geraldo’s curling lip—everyone else. *Was I serious?* Walker yelled. Was I really so cruel to think that Marcia Lewis deserved this?

Then I lost my temper: Well, *Mr. Enquirer*, I replied, what was so wrong in suggesting that parents should teach their children to tell the truth? If she were *my* daughter, I went on—rather recklessly because Walker’s eyes were now bulging—first I’d box her ears. Then I’d march her into Mr. Starr’s office *myself* and insist she tell the truth.

Walker practically flew out of his chair. For a moment I thought he was going to attack me, like one of those agitated boyfriends on Jerry Springer. “*Box her ears?* What *century* are you from?” he thundered. Then he leveled the snob accusation. Geraldo stood by, watching the exchange with the serene detachment of

an emperor enjoying the spectacle of lion ripping apart victim.

Mercifully, we went to a commercial break.

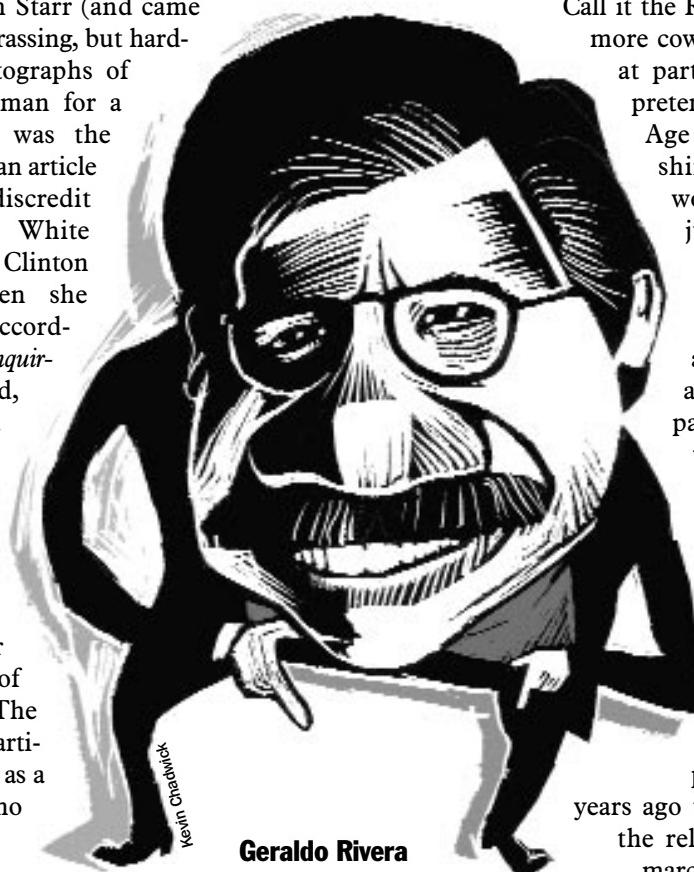
It was only later that I learned Michael Walker's vociferous defense of the president was not entirely disinterested. The president's personal lawyer, David Kendall, is also, coincidentally, the lawyer for the *National Enquirer*. While the tabloid denies Kendall has offered them tips or leaks, the *Enquirer* has given the president noticeably sympathetic coverage. It was the *Enquirer* that hired private eyes to dig into the background of Ken Starr (and came up only with the embarrassing, but hardly incriminating, photographs of Starr dressed as a woman for a high-school play). It was the *Enquirer* that published an article that attempted to discredit Kathleen Willey, the White House volunteer whom Clinton allegedly groped when she asked him for a job. According to *Newsweek*, the *Enquirer* paid Willey's friend, Julie Steele, \$7,000 for a photograph of Willey and the president—after which Steele suddenly changed her story and announced that Willey had confessed to her that Willey's account of being groped was a lie. The photo accompanied an article that depicted Willey as a "conniving woman" who hoped to "cash in on her alleged liaison" with the president.

So—stop the presses—the *Enquirer* isn't a bastion of fairness and impartiality. But what was truly creepy about my encounter with Walker, and in fact the whole *Geraldo* experience, was coming face to face with the utter shamelessness of a certain type of Clinton defender. These defenders do not believe that the president is innocent. They are not even agnostic. They simply don't care that he is guilty—whether of sexual misconduct or perjury or even obstruction of justice. Indeed, they appear almost liberated by the president's behavior, and buoyed by his public support. It's as if in

the president's ability to skate free, they have finally found personal absolution for their own lives.

In his memoirs, Geraldo Rivera describes receiving oral sex in a boat in Central Park from a woman whom he heavily implies was Maggie Trudeau, the ex-wife of the former prime minister of Canada. In another era, really not so long ago (maybe last year), a man who coarsely described his sexual exploits, and even offered up the woman's identity, for public consumption would be regarded as—how shall I put it?—not a gentleman. But Geraldo tells this story with undisguised pride. In his mind, he's a stud, not a cad. And now, hot damn, so is the president of the United States!

Call it the Revenge of the Creeps. No more cowering before angry wives at parties. No more having to pretend you're a sensitive New Age guy. Put away the hair shirt. You're free to use women and boast about it, just as in those halcyon days of the 1970s. Thanks to the Big Creep, all the little creeps can once again boast, to roars of approval from their jerk pals, that the little hussy was just *askin' for it*. And, amazingly, they can remain members in good standing of polite liberal society.



Geraldo Rivera

In this, the creeps appear to have the public's hooting support. It was only a few years ago that liberals warned that the religious Right was on the march, on the verge of imposing its narrow-minded, God-fearing

morality on everyone else. Well, one could hope. Instead, the president's behavior has brought together the strangest bedfellows, as it were, united in their admiration for Clinton's studliness. The Rev. Billy Graham has offered his forgiveness for the guy because, as he jockishly observed, "I know how hard it is [for the president]. . . . I think the ladies just go wild over him." The president's plight also brought Hugh Hefner out of cryogenic suspension to comment, à la Austin Powers, that "we have a playboy in the White House. . . . Try as it may, the puritan mob

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will not be able to put Clinton into the stocks." And the creeps of the pundit class have chimed in. As Eric Alterman of the *Nation* put it: "If you cheat on your wife, you have to lie about it. . . . It's no big deal." Right.

Meanwhile, the president's critics, in attempting to explain Clinton's otherwise bewilderingly high popularity ratings—ratings that seem to climb with the release of every sordid new detail—are reduced to mumbling that the American people are simply showing how fair-minded they are, by reserving judgment until Ken Starr makes his case. But I don't believe this is so. If the public were so fair-minded, it would also be reserving judgment about Ken Starr. Yet the polls, which began by showing that the public was willing to tolerate a presidential extramarital affair but not perjury, now show that the public is willing to tolerate perjury but not subornation of perjury.

That the voters who supported Reagan can now support a man like Clinton is, however, maybe not so odd as it seems. A friend of mine offered the following observation: People loved Reagan, she said, because he appealed to what is best in us; and people love Clinton because he appeals to what is worst. There are a lot of baby boomers who, as they settle into late middle age, remember their youth with equal measures of embarrassment and wistfulness. They may not have gotten it off with the wives of former prime ministers or behind their desks with interns. They may never have visited Studio 54, not even past its heyday. But they remember a few

steamy nights with people not their spouses. They remember getting high and listening to Dylan and curling up with a chick whose name they've forgotten but whose musky perfume they can still recall. They may be on their second or third or fourth marriage. And after the moralistic chill of the past decade, as the careers of CEOs and military officers have fallen over an indiscreet remark or naughty joke, these boomers might now be ready to say enough is enough. They, too, are sick of being hectored by the feminists. And since feminist morality is the only morality they can imagine, the feminist excuses for the president have provided Geraldo and company exculpation for the crudest standards of behavior. If you're not judgmental about Clinton, after all, then perhaps you can avoid being judgmental about yourself.

Towards the end of my *Geraldo* ordeal, we watched a clip of Ken Starr leaving his home. That was all he was doing: simply walking. Geraldo, who had been defensive of every clip of the president, suddenly let loose at the sight of Starr, ridiculing his clothes, his supposedly "smug" smile, the way he walked. And here, I thought, we finally reached the heart of creepiness. Geraldo and his guests and his audience sneer at Ken Starr not because they believe he is a madman on a vendetta but because, as Geraldo so devastatingly pointed out, Starr is a square in a suit. What Geraldo did not say, but of course meant, was that Starr is precisely the sort of square in a suit who still believes a creep is a creep, not a victim. ♦

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## SUHARTO DARKNESS

By Ellen Bork

For months now, the skies over Jakarta have been thick—not just with smoke from raging forest fires but also with the planes of Clinton administration and IMF officials. Deputy treasury secretary Lawrence Summers visited, then defense secretary William Cohen, followed by International Monetary Fund president Michel Camdessus. President Clinton has telephoned Indonesia's President Suharto several times. Finally, former vice president Walter Mondale

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*Ellen Bork is senior professional staff member for East Asia and the Pacific of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.*

was dispatched to deliver the latest administration entreaty to Suharto to please—please—keep his promises to the IMF to undertake reforms and dismantle his kids' and cronies' monopolies, which have made Indonesia one of the most corrupt regimes in the world. Despite all the coming and going, Indonesia continues to let its commitments to the IMF slide. Suharto made known what he thinks of all these missions by adopting new security powers, claiming the IMF package violates the Indonesian constitution, and appointing as his vice president an old friend whose selection eroded confidence in the rupiah even further.

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The issue is no longer whether Suharto will comply with the IMF's demands (he won't), but when the Clinton administration will accept that the Suharto regime is in its death throes.

Suharto, the world's longest-ruling dictator after Fidel Castro, came to power in 1965 in a coup that unleashed a bloodbath against suspected members of the Indonesian Communist party. Since then, he has ruled with an artful blend of repression, political manipulation, and a pretense of democratic reforms so successful that U.S. officials and others routinely refer to his periodic reappointment as his "election." This year's State Department human-rights report documents extrajudicial killings, disappearances, arbitrary arrests, and torture.

The military's occupation of East Timor continues, and according to Human Rights Watch/Asia, repression there increased during the past year. Endemic corruption is such that, according to Jeffrey A. Winters writing in the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, the World Bank office in Jakarta "admits that 30 percent of the money lent to Indonesia routinely disappears somewhere inside the government."

Americans have seen the end come for enough regimes around the world that they know what to expect. "Authoritarian systems give you stability—until it goes, and when it goes, it goes spectacularly," observed Paul Wolfowitz, a former U.S. ambassador to Indonesia, at a conference on Indonesia last November. Suharto's failure to provide for a successor has been obvious for years.

But the Clinton administration has no policy for dealing with the end of the Suharto regime. Instead, the administration is torn by internal debates, which fail to reach the heart of the problem. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, Mondale was tapped for the mission because no single sitting official could represent the disparate views emanating from Treasury, the State Department, and the White House. So far, though, the one option not represented in the administration's policy free-for-all is promoting a democratic transition. To the contrary, the single unifying theme is sticking with Suharto. Certainly this was the message secretary of state Madeleine Albright sent to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on February 10 when she said, "I think the issue is that we need to . . . deal with him on the long run here."

Absent from the secretary's remarks were any appreciation of the political causes of Indonesia's economic mess and any expression of support for concrete steps toward democracy. She also passed up the opportunity to call for restraint by the armed forces, which on February 17 issued shoot-to-kill orders, and to crit-

icize the regime's scapegoating of the country's ethnic Chinese minority.

For more than a year and a half, the Clinton administration has looked on while Suharto engineered his smooth accession to a seventh five-year term as president; he was sworn in last week. He unleashed a campaign against anyone capable of presenting an alternative to his rule and even resurrected the Communist threat. In June 1996, the government orchestrated the removal of the popular leader of the Indonesian Democratic party (PDI), one of two parties created by the government to function as a controlled "opposition." At a rigged party convention in Medan in northern Sumatra, the regime ousted Megawati, daughter of Indonesia's first post-independence leader, Sukarno.

When PDI members loyal to Megawati occupied the party's headquarters in Jakarta and held a peaceful "free speech forum," the government sent mobs to storm the building and start riots, in which several people were killed. Next, the government stoked fears of a Communist resurgence, tagging a tiny radical Revolutionary Democratic party as Communist and charging its leaders and other prominent political and labor figures with subversion. Leaders of nongovernment organizations, which play a preeminent role in representing the interests of citizens in Indonesia thanks to the ban on independent political activity, were yanked in for repeated interrogations, and the regime threatened to bar foreign funding of such organizations.

The Clinton administration responded meekly. Testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on September 18, 1996, assistant secretary of state Winston Lord supported "evolution toward a political system that is more responsive to the aspirations of its people for a larger voice in their future." When pressed, Lord at least criticized as unfounded the Suharto regime's exploitation of a supposed Communist threat, which is more than any administration official has done with respect to the scapegoating of Chinese.

More important, the administration signaled its readiness for business as usual with Jakarta by proceeding toward the proposed sale of nine F-16 fighters. These jets were among the 28 planes denied to Pakistan by the 1990 Pressler Amendment's ban on sales to countries engaged in nuclear proliferation. Fearful of congressional opposition, the administration postponed the sale to Indonesia until early 1997. By that time, however, the campaign-finance scandal in Wash-

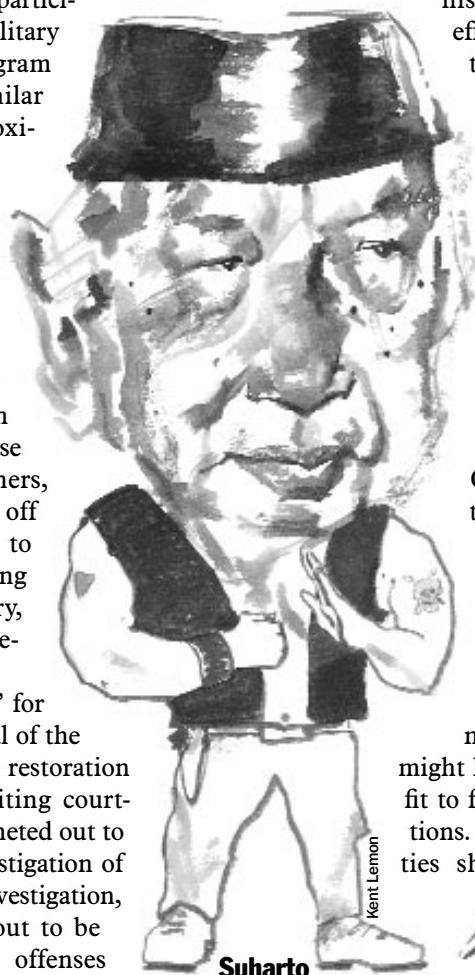
ington had roared into high gear, and the sale was effectively canceled.

Jakarta got the message anyway: Given the chance, the Clinton administration would make the sale in spite of Suharto's heavy-handed tactics, arbitrary arrests, and torture, and in spite of strong sentiment against the sale among Indonesian opposition figures and even some affiliated with the regime. No one in the administration ever argued that Indonesia *needed* the F-16s.

Despite Suharto's crackdown of the past 20 months, the administration also supports renewing Indonesia's full participation in the International Military Education and Training program (IMET). Since the 1950s, similar programs have trained approximately 3,000 Indonesian military and civilian personnel. IMET has borne the brunt of congressional disapproval of Indonesia's human rights record, especially in East Timor, which Indonesia occupied in 1975. The Dili massacre of 1991, in which the Indonesian military killed about 50 Timorese and injured at least 100 others, prompted Congress to cut off IMET two years later, then to restore it for courses emphasizing civilian control of the military, military justice, and management.

Winning back "full IMET" for Indonesia has been a major goal of the administration, which justifies restoration of the training program by citing court-martials and prison sentences meted out to human rights abusers at the instigation of IMET graduates. On further investigation, however, the sentences turn out to be exceedingly light for the offenses involved.

While even longtime critics of the Suharto regime acknowledge some improvements in respect for human rights by the armed forces, they attribute the progress to outside pressure—including the congressional cutoff of IMET in 1993. All the progress cited by the administration occurred after the cutoff—except that attributable to the commission investigating the Dili massacre, which in turn came only as a result of intense international pressure.



Suharto

Still, the administration is quick to claim that pressure doesn't work and that the United States has no influence over the Indonesian military. Deputy assistant secretary of defense Kurt Campbell testified at the September 1996 hearing, "It is unrealistic to assume that any U.S. policies or actions taken toward the Indonesian military will produce fundamental changes in the military's behavior." Instead, "Changing military attitudes and behavior will depend on the broader political trends and the transition to a more open political system."

Exactly. Although Campbell intended his remarks to justify IMET as a cost-effective program that brings incremental change, they actually point to an essential flaw in the administration's Indonesia policy. The military remains the dominant institution in Indonesia. Under the doctrine of "dual function" (*dwifungsi*) promulgated by Suharto after his 1965 takeover, the military pervades government. In other words, the armed forces, known as ABRI, are not simply the instrument of a dictatorial regime, they *are* the regime.

Under these circumstances, the Clinton administration's disproportionate emphasis on the small IMET program—*independent* of any larger policy for encouraging change—is a throwback to the days when the United States saw Suharto as a reliable anti-Communist ally in Southeast Asia. During the Cold War, incremental improvement in the military might have been a significant corollary benefit to friendly U.S.-Indonesian military relations. But in today's changed world, priorities should be different. Reform-minded members of the Indonesian military will respond more seriously to a U.S. policy vigorously favoring transition

to a democratic system with civilian control of the military than they will to a small-budget program that presumes ABRI's dominance for years to come.

Neither Indonesia's military nor U.S. strategic thinkers believe Indonesia faces a major external threat, let alone a Communist one. As Adam Schwarz writes in *A Nation in Waiting*, "While the Indonesian military has worked hard to keep the communist bogeyman alive, . . . the argument has been thread-

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bare for a long time and, with the ending of the Cold War and the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe, it is approaching the point of farce." While China's foray into the South China Sea near the Natuna gas fields has emerged as a concern, it hardly represents a reason for propping up Suharto. The best bet for an Indonesia capable of acting as an ally in the region is democracy.

In the absence of significant external threats, ABRI's chief responsibility is maintaining internal control. Suharto's defenders claim that without the strong hand of the military, Indonesia, with its over 13,000 islands and numerous ethnic groups, might erupt like Bosnia or break apart like the former Soviet Union. That's difficult to tell, but it's no justification for maintaining Indonesia's system. Challenges to central rule, for example in East Timor and Aceh, should be dealt with through democratic change, devolution of political power, and broader representation at the national level.

Deputy assistant secretary Campbell's dim view of U.S. influence over policies in Indonesia is widely held in the administration. "We don't have a lot of leverage," a senior official told the *New York Times*. That's preposterous, of course. It is hard to imagine circumstances under which Washington could have more leverage than it does now.

The administration's self-marginalization in Indonesia brings to mind the theory briefly propounded by President Clinton last year that democracy is inevitable in China. If progress toward democracy is inexorable, there is no need to support pro-democracy activists. In the case of Indonesia, the presupposed absence of any alternative to the septuagenarian Suharto—and the settled belief that Indonesia's economic success has somehow conferred legitimacy on its government—absolves the administration of the obligation to seek out and support democratic alternatives.

In reality, however, Suharto faces growing opposition from the public, including mounting student demonstrations and challenges from a number of figures who advocate democracy and represent significant followings. In addition to Megawati, there is Abdurrahman Wahid, a revered leader of the most influential nongovernmental Muslim organization in Indonesia, Nahdlatul Ulama. Wahid is an articulate advocate for secular democracy and tolerance of non-Muslims. Amien Rais, of Muhammadiyah, another mass Islamic group, has criticized Suharto and his family for corruption, saying, "Mr. Suharto is the

problem," and, "Without political reform, the economic reform will go nowhere." Given a chance, they and others pushing the limits of tolerated dissent could indeed emerge as credible leaders.

Acceptance of the idea that there are no alternatives to his rule is a sign of how effective Suharto has been at neutralizing his opponents and numbing international opinion. That's what dictators do. Indonesian politics is an elaborate nationwide charade, with the government party, Golkar, conceived as an instrument for extending the military's reach into the parliament, which it dominates. As Adam Schwarz writes, "the running joke about the parliament is that its activities can be summarized by the five Ds: datang, duduk, dengar, diam, duit, which means roughly, 'show up, sit down, listen, shut up and collect your paycheck.'" The only two other legal political organizations, the PDI and the PPP, are creations of Suharto, operate under severe restrictions, and must subscribe to the state ideology, *pancasila*.

Indonesia is just the latest spot in Asia where the administration is subordinating democracy to other policy objectives, chiefly economic ones. In China, the administration has pursued craven commercialism and waited for that "inevitable" democratic evolution. In Cambodia, it quickly acquiesced to Hun Sen's power grab after the 1993 elections. In Vietnam, it is rushing to extend trade benefits such as Overseas Private Investment Corporation and Export-Import Bank financing and is chomping at the bit to extend most-favored-nation status regardless of whether Vietnam releases religious prisoners or adopts democratic reforms. In Burma, the administration bent over backwards to avoid implementing a statutory investment ban designed to kick in when repression by the military junta became severe. In his days as a senator, Secretary of Defense Cohen himself had crafted the trigger, setting the bar high enough to make any investment ban unlikely. Over his objections, a ban was eventually imposed in 1997 after the junta launched a vicious campaign against the National League for Democracy and Aung San Suu Kyi. And the administration refuses to acknowledge violations of the Sino-British Joint Declaration on Hong Kong that have enabled China to set up bogus election laws in Hong Kong through a puppet legislature.

The Asian financial crisis is just the latest example of the administration's subordination of political objectives to economic interests. Yet the economic crisis has reinforced rather than undermined the need for democracy and the rule of law. Asia's democrats,

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including South Korea's Kim Dae Jung and Hong Kong's Martin Lee, agree that the fundamental cause of the current trouble is, as Kim put it, the "placing of economic development ahead of democracy." The region's dictatorships, by contrast, are drawing exactly the message the administration has sent consistently over the past few years: that political freedom and economic development are separable and, at times during a country's development, incompatible. Furthermore, the U.S. interest in economic development will trump its other American interests. How else to explain Secretary Albright's testimony that "in all the problems of the Asian financial crisis, these people are our customers. They are our competitors. If they are not doing well, they will cut the prices."

The first stage of the transition battle has been won by Suharto. Assuming the presidency for the seventh time, he has succeeded in resisting the IMF's prescriptions, installing his best friend, B. J. Habibie, as vice president and reportedly preparing to appoint cabinet members hostile to reform. So far, no major Clinton-administration official has emerged to lead a push for a U.S. policy favoring a transition to democracy. In the

absence of administration leadership on Indonesia, Congress will step in. Newt Gingrich supports tying IMF funds directly to Suharto's departure. More calls like that from the Hill are likely from both sides of the aisle. A hearing on Indonesia on March 24 in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will force the administration to articulate its policy. Over the next few weeks, look for the administration to present Indonesia in much the same light as China, a country from which, we are told, the United States needs support on numerous regional and international issues and where Asian sensitivities preclude Americans' "telling it like it is" about democracy, the rule of law, and corruption. This will be a clear sign that the administration is prepared to sail with the Suharto ship of state.

If, instead, the administration should begin to discuss the connection between Indonesia's sclerotic political system and its economic problems, to call for free elections and demonstrate support for the democratic opposition, that would be a hopeful sign. It would indicate that the Clinton administration could see the obvious: that the Suharto regime is in a death spiral and the only real question is what will replace it. ♦

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# MILOSEVIC MURDERS AGAIN

By Stephen Schwartz

Sarajevo

**S**omething the press calls a "war" is going on in Kosovo, a southern province of Serbia. Between late February and March 9, the conflict took at least 50 lives and perhaps as many as 80, with dozens missing. Most of the dead were ethnic Albanians, as are 90 percent of the province's people. The Serbian media—state controlled, but parroted nonetheless by the press around the world—described the campaign as a necessary move by the government against a shadowy terrorist group, the Kosovo Liberation Army or UCK (pronounced oo-che-ka).

It remains unclear, however, who the attackers were and whether the UCK was actually involved; nor was the action, in the Drenica district of Kosovo, really much like war. It was worse than one-sided: By all honest accounts, it was a pogrom, an orgy of killing,

intended to induce submission by the Albanians and to thrill the Serbs by once more venting their frustrations, never mind if innocent people should happen to get hurt.

By March 9, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright had prevailed on the Contact Group, comprising the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Russia, and Italy, to agree on measures conveying Western concern about the violence to Serbian dictator Slobodan Milosevic. Milosevic is running this adventure even more directly than he ran the assaults on Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Hercegovina in 1991-92.

Albright seems to have proceeded with extraordinary caution. For all her angry speechifying, she sought to temper sanctions with diplomacy. In the end, the Contact Group agreed to little more than a weapons embargo against Belgrade (which has a major arms industry of its own) and a partial freeze on Serbian assets abroad. This approach seems intended primarily to keep Milosevic on board as a supporter of

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Stephen Schwartz, a writer for the San Francisco Chronicle, spent the last month in the Balkans.

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the Dayton peace agreement on Bosnia.

Such half-measures will not satisfy those Albanians who expect the United States to save them. Their touching hope that America will come to their rescue owes less to any confidence in Bill Clinton—or even Bob Dole, who has done yeoman's work for Albanian rights in Kosovo—than it does to the principles of Martin Luther King. Indeed, most Kosovar Albanians remain committed to nonviolence in their quest for greater autonomy within a rump Yugoslavia.

Although their leadership under Ibrahim Rugova calls itself a national government and claims to want an independent Kosovo, its actions are moderate in the extreme. Leaders even invest efforts in winning over Serbs—and have some success, amazing as that may seem. Among the Serb minority in Kosovo, voices are raised for a peaceful solution, while across the border in Albania proper, recent demonstrations in Tirana, the capital, protesting the Kosovo atrocities, have included placards and leaflets appealing for support from the Serb nation. Desperate as they are, most Kosovar Albanians simply don't see either armed resistance or independence as a realistic option.

**F**or the last nine years, the Albanians of Kosovo have lived in conditions worse than anything suffered by blacks in apartheid South Africa. In the face of extreme provocation, they have shown extraordinary forbearance. Ever since Milosevic abolished the province's autonomy in 1989, the Albanian majority has gone without regular health or education services. All Albanian infants born in Kosovo have been delivered in private homes; all schooling up through university has taken place in quasi-clandestine circumstances.

Against this backdrop, tensions have grown in the past two years. At least 50 people were killed by one side or the other in scattered incidents in Kosovo, and Balkan observers repeatedly expressed alarm about the activities in the region of the Serb extremist Arkan (Zeljko Raznjatovic), one of the worst terrorists of the Bosnian war and a favorite henchman of Milosevic. Then in late 1997, beefy Serb cops descended, clubs in hand, on a peaceful march of Albanian students in Prishtina demanding restoration of their university. Anyone who watched Belgrade TV could see that the crisis was intensifying. The Serbian media were filled with not-very-subtle tales of the Albanian mafia and alleged Albanian mistreatment of Serbs in Kosovo.

In January, an armed attack on a Serb police station and the killing of a Serb official on a highway followed a raid on the Kosovar Albanian village of Lower

Prekaz. At first, the Serbian press reported that the attack on the police station had been carried out by "unidentified persons," and Serb authorities denied that any intercommunal fighting had taken place. Rather, they said, two Albanian factions had engaged in a gun battle. According to the Serbian opposition weekly *Vreme*, however, the violence began on January 22 when Serb police tried to enter Lower Prekaz for the first time since 1992. They set up a forward post in a factory yard, then sneaked into the village early in the morning. The gambit failed when they were met with gunfire from the family compound of Adem Jashari, a well-known local leader. The Serbs professed shock that their enemies were armed with mortars. Two women from the Jashari family were hurt, and the body of a factory worker was found later.

That the Jasharis had mortars in their possession was not unpredictable, however, and hardly pointed to involvement with the UCK, as the Serbian authorities later claimed. Albanian culture validates possession of firearms to an extent unknown even in Serbia. Many families and villages in Kosovo have made long-standing preparations for defense. And in neighboring Albania, arms proliferated after the collapse of the government in Tirana in 1997; some of them undoubtedly found their way across the border.

In the wake of the January 22 incident, the Serbs imposed a de facto military curfew on Drenica. The funerals of the two dead men—the Serb official killed on the road, mourned by 10,000 Serbs and Montenegrins, and the Albanian factory worker from Lower Prekaz, attended by 20,000 Albanians—heightened tensions.

Thus, the subsequent clashes, in early March, including the destruction of Lower Prekaz, hardly came out of nowhere. Several important facts have gone unreported in the Western press. Although at least two units of the Yugoslav army participated in the Kosovo operation there are indications that the army command is reluctant to get involved. The March attack on "Albanian terrorists" was carried out mainly by heavily armed police and blackshirted paramilitaries, and Arkan was reportedly among the leaders. In addition, Serb refugees from Croatia who had resettled in Kosovo were armed and sent into the streets.

Most of the Albanians killed in the recent massacre had little or nothing to do with the UCK, despite the Serbs' claim that the demolition of the Jashari compound had eliminated the core of the terrorist group. Jashari himself, although active in armed resistance, may have had the UCK label pinned on him in the same way the Bolshevik label was pinned on all Polish

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and Jewish resisters by the Nazis in World War II Poland. Indeed, many Kosovar Albanians believe that the UÇK (which seems to have survived the Drenica events unscathed) was created by the Serbs as a pretext for repression. As the days go by, this suspicion seems less Balkan and more plausible.

**T**wo major questions remain: How great is the danger of a regional conflagration, and what is driving Milosevic?

The threat to the countries that border on Kosovo, such as Albania and Macedonia, and to the next tier of countries, such as Greece and Turkey, is very serious. The Macedonian government, dominated by Slav nationalists but confronting its own 40 percent Albanian minority, is playing a classic Balkan game with Milosevic. Feigning generosity, the Macedonians recently offered to set up a "humanitarian corridor" through their territory to allow Albanians to flee Kosovo for Albania. Albanians everywhere angrily rejected this scheme as a population transfer more accurately called ethnic cleansing.

The Albanians of Macedonia are more prosperous than the Kosovars, with, among other strategic assets, many more cell phones and Range Rovers, and they cannot be expected to sit on their hands if pogroms continue. Milosevic has reportedly asked Skopje for the right of hot pursuit of alleged Albanian terrorists into Macedonia.

If the fighting spills into Macedonia, the potential for Greek and Turkish involvement is considerable, since Athens remains unreconciled to the existence of an independent Macedonia, while Turkey has pledged to defend it. Albania itself is different. Emotional rallies have been held in its cities, and the outside world has difficulty imagining that Tirana would fail to defend the Kosovars; yet the sad truth is that the Albanians inside Albania have done little to aid or protect their brethren outside their borders.

Another concern is that with the political situation in Albania unsettled and so many firearms present, the effects on Albania of any Kosovo fighting are unpredictable. During the Serb assault on Lower Prekaz, Tirana put the troops on its border with Kosovo on high alert but sent no reinforcements.

Albania's leaders have problems of their own. In February, the northern city of Shkoder was rocked by rioting that the politicians blamed on Serbian intrigues. But discontent inside Albania would seem to have a good deal in common with the rumblings among the Serbs of Belgrade and the Croats of Zagreb and hardly requires any byzantine explanation.

As for Milosevic's motives, it is important to notice how high the stakes are. Indeed, the Kosovo drama is a lot like a suicide waltz: On the one hand, the Kosovar Albanians would very quickly attain mass martyrdom if they took up the gun. On the other hand, if Kosovo were to erupt, Milosevic himself could be done for.

Milosevic has made himself indispensable to Clinton and NATO by becoming a pillar of the Dayton agreement: He has thrown his Socialist Party of Serbia (formerly the Communist party) behind Biljana Plavsic, the pro-Dayton president of the Bosnian Serb Republic. But the same Serbian Socialist apparat that supports Plavsic has played a key role in maintaining the terror in Kosovo.

In his propaganda, Milosevic dwells on Serbia's "right to settle its own internal affairs in Kosovo," along with the familiar claims to Serbian sovereignty over a region that has been without a Slavic majority for 400 years.

But Milosevic's keenest need is to distract his own restive populace from its economic woes, of which Western sanctions are a secondary cause. Although their homeland escaped the direct ravages of the Croatian and Bosnian wars, the impoverished Serbs of rump Yugoslavia have seen their standard of living devastated by post-Communist economic chaos and the rise of the Serbian mafia.

Above all, the Serb in the street feels growing anger at the hopeless poverty of pensioners, whose income has never recovered from the breakup of the old Yugoslavia. The apparently impossible task of sorting out who owns what as the country emerges from nearly half a century of communism has, among other things, robbed millions of ex-Yugoslavs of the hard-currency savings they held before 1990.

Croatian supremo Franjo Tudjman faces a similar challenge. The weekend before the Kosovo clash, some 80,000 Croats turned out to chant "Franjo-Saddam" and wrestle with police in Zagreb over grievances that differ remarkably little from those voiced by Belgraders. And economic difficulties, exacerbated by the absence of effective privatization and labor laws, are the topic of the hour in both the Bosnian entities.

Madeleine Albright was right to express indignation over the Kosovo massacres. Above all, the United States should be outraged at Milosevic for undertaking such aggression just a week after Washington announced that millions in aid would be granted his allies in the Bosnian Serb Republic. Unfortunately, Milosevic remains the man of the hour in the Balkans, in full control of events in Kosovo and apparently determined to use any means at hand to make his war-weary people unite once again behind him. ♦

## IT'S WORSE THAN SPIN

*Howard Kurtz on Clinton's Liars*

By Andrew Ferguson

**T**oday's quiz concerns a quote from last week's *Washington Post*. Mike McCurry, the president's press secretary, was asked to comment on the claim, made by Senate majority leader Trent Lott, that the Monica Lewinsky scandal has "distracted" President Clinton from his official responsibilities. And Mike McCurry said, "It hasn't distracted the president."

Now first, a show of hands. How many of you actually believe Mike McCurry when he says this?

Yes, yes, yes, I know all the possible caveats and qualifiers and objections. The word "distract" comes to us from the Latin *distrahere*, meaning to draw apart, itself a combination of the prefix *dis-* and the verb *trahere*, which in turn means "to draw." The president does not, as part of his official duties, draw, or sketch with charcoal, or, for that matter, paint with watercolors. So, etymologically, McCurry's statement is quite accurate. The scandal has not kept the president from any official role as Drawer-in-Chief. Let's be clear: The president has no such official role. He wakes up every morning and goes to work doing the job the American people sent him here to do, and if you think for one minute that he's going to be diverted by *drawing pictures*, for God's sake, then you simply don't understand this president. Why are we talking about drawing, anyway? What does drawing have to do with it? What about education and the environment and the issues that the American people . . . et cetera.

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Andrew Ferguson is a senior editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

Fine. But let's stick for the moment to ordinary understandings—to the language as ordinary people grasp it. Who actually believes that the Lewinsky scandal has not distracted the president?

No one? No one. Good. Now to the tricky part. Does the fact that McCurry's statement, made in the course of his professional duties, is not true—that it is, as it were, a bald-

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**Howard Kurtz**  
*Spin Cycle:  
Inside the Clinton  
Propaganda Machine*

Free Press, 324 pp., \$25

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faced, brazen, breathtaking lie—does this fact make Mike McCurry

- (a) a professional liar;
- (b) a fine man trapped in a difficult situation; or
- (c) the best press secretary ever?

If you said (c), you win. It's not the correct answer, of course, but in choosing it you have shown that you have a subtle and nuanced understanding of the "information flows" within the political culture and thereby share the sentiments of a large majority of the Washington press corps. More specifically, you agree with Wolf Blitzer, who is on record saying the same thing. Congratulations: For being as sophisticated as a Washington journalist, you win a year-long internship on *Inside Politics* and a date with either Wolf or Bobbie Batista. Your choice.

Blitzer's opinion of McCurry is to be found in the new book by Howard Kurtz, *Spin Cycle: Inside the Clinton Propaganda Machine*. Kurtz is the *Washington Post*'s media critic, and is

thus himself an important conduit of those fabled Beltway information flows. As a critic, Kurtz is thoroughly conventional. His earlier books, *Hot Air* and *Media Circus*, were full of Fred Friendly-like tut-tuttery about the erosion of standards in the tabloid culture and whatnot. As a media reporter, though, Kurtz is invaluable: brave and resourceful and lavishly productive. And it is the straightforward reporting that makes *Spin Cycle* the best book in many years on the Washington media. If there's justice in the world, this will endure as one of the essential documents of the Clinton era. But that's a big "if."

Kurtz tagged along as the Clinton propaganda machine rumbled and smoked its way through the year 1997. It was a busy year for the spin-masters (but then aren't they all?). The campaign-finance scandals blossomed spectacularly, while the Paula Jones lawsuit grew more menacing. By the look of it, Kurtz enjoyed generous access both to reporters and their opposite numbers in the White House press office, and he is careful to preserve his future access by casting just about everyone in the best possible light.

Most of the reporters come off as rigorous, non-ideological bird dogs—tough but fair, as they like to say—who grow increasingly frustrated with the White House's lack of candor. For their part, the press spokesmen—particularly McCurry and White House deputy counsel Lanny Davis—come off as honorable men constantly pressing their superiors for full disclosure of the truth. Not to put too fine a point on it, but Kurtz's

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own reporting suggests that none of this is true.

The star of the book is McCurry. He is by most accounts a charming fellow. Humor, says Kurtz, "was his saving grace." He once opened a briefing wearing a paper bag over his head, identifying himself as an anonymous source, and his reputation as a fun-lover was secure ever after. In his early 40s, he is a contemporary of most White House reporters—he once had ambitions to be a reporter himself—and cut from the same demographic cloth: upper middle class, well schooled, vaguely liberal but not overtly ideological. What truly endears him to the press, though, is the slight signals he gives off that he is not really taking himself, his job, or, more importantly, his boss completely seriously.

For presidential staff, the wink-and-a-nod strategy is wildly effective. It was perfected in the Reagan years, when staffers like David Gergen and James Baker would stand by their boss in public and then, off the record, let it be known that they knew, just as the reporters knew, that the old fellow was really rather dotty (and so right-wing!). Subordinates like George Stephanopoulos, on the other hand, who were as loyal off the record as on, become widely disliked by the press.

McCurry is widely liked. *Spin Cycle*'s most sensational anecdote has to do with a remark McCurry made after President Clinton's famous yummy-mummy comment. Clinton, you'll recall, once interrupted a dinner speech to note, bizarrely, that he would like to date a mummy recently discovered in Peru. McCurry told the president the remark was ill advised, and they had a spat. Riding home on the press plane that evening, McCurry told reporters, off the record: "Probably she does look good compared to the mummy he's been f—."

It is upon just such comments that a relationship of trust and affection is established in contemporary Washington. (He makes fun of his boss's

wife—calls her a mummy—says f—a lot—What a guy!) "He had a way of making each reporter think they had a special relationship," Kurtz writes. "He would lower his voice and impart sensitive information." Floating on this deep reservoir of goodwill, McCurry can then get down to his real job, which is to ensure that reporters discover as little as possible about what's really going on. This is not, as some cynics might suggest, the normal role of a presidential press secretary. Press secretaries have always tried to keep some information from the press, of course: sensitive diplomatic efforts, matters of national security, the intimate details of presidential deliberations. But the spokesman-as-prevaricator is an innovation of the Clinton era, and for an obvious reason: There's more to hide.

The campaign-finance scandals offered McCurry ample opportunity to do his job, and Kurtz shows us the spokesman's techniques in full throttle. There is, first of all, the outright lie. We all remember the fund-raising coffees that McCurry said weren't fund-raisers, but his lies could be applied to the most trivial items as well. To take one example among many: Rita Braver of CBS once discovered that Mark Middleton, a key player in the scandals and one of their many Fifth Amendment adepts, had been treating clients to meals in the White House mess after he'd left the administration—a highly unusual privilege, to say the least. McCurry said he couldn't confirm Braver's report, so she didn't broadcast it. The next morning the Middleton story appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, with White House confirmation. McCurry had planted it in the newspaper to keep it off the more damaging medium of television.

Often the lie is buttressed by bullying. When it was revealed that Dick Morris had an illegitimate daughter, reporters asked McCurry whether Clinton had known about it, and McCurry said no. When

reporters pressed him, he badgered back. Why were reporters descending to the level of the tabloids? But of course Clinton had known, as McCurry eventually conceded after most reporters had lost interest. And when David Watkins, a former presidential confidant, told a reporter that Clinton was having an affair with a woman on the White House payroll, McCurry refused to answer the allegations, choosing to shame his reporters instead.

"I want to put news organizations in the position of having to exercise careful editorial judgment," he said.

The press has an acute sense of its own virtue, its pious adherence to standards, so McCurry's tactic of bullying invariably worked. It worked even when the story wasn't "tabloid trash." Michael Kranish of the *Boston Globe* published the first documented evidence that John Huang had demanded changes in administration policy in return for his munificent fund-raising efforts.

"The *Boston Globe* is just wrong," McCurry said in the daily briefing, and then he took to the phones privately to tell other reporters that the story was "outrageous." Indeed: It was also true. But the bullying did the trick. "Other than a CNN segment and a couple of wire-service reports," Kurtz writes, "the story didn't exist. They had killed it."

When lying and bullying won't kill a story, McCurry deflects it. He has compartmentalized his job and tells reporters that certain questions are beyond his range. This technique was perfected in the fund-raising scandals, and it is invaluable today, in the Lewinsky affair. If McCurry finds a question inconvenient, he tells a reporter that it should be directed to somebody's counsel—John Huang's, Mark Middleton's, the president's, and now Betty Currie's or Vernon Jordan's. And the lawyers won't answer the question either, as McCurry knows. Someone other than McCurry gets to answer "No comment," and the question withers.

McCurry's techniques, masterfully deployed though they are, couldn't be sustained without the tacit compliance of the reporters themselves. Lying works only on the credulous, and bullying works only on wimps. Kurtz would never call his colleagues credulous wimps, of course—he'd never work in this town again—but he does show them to be, at a minimum, SNAGGs, or Sensitive New Age Guys and Gals. (He doesn't use the specific term.) And they are a manipulable bunch. Kurtz's most harrowing anecdote shows Lanny Davis, in a room outside the Thompson campaign-finance hearings, dictating quotes to the Associated Press reporter Larry Margasak. "He was injecting his verbiage directly into the wire story," Kurtz writes, "the one that would set the tone for much of the day's coverage."

The manipulation also took subtler forms. One typical example: When White House flacks told the *Post*'s John Harris that Clinton would use his second term to be a national unifier, Harris's Pavlovian response was a front-pager titled: "Clinton to Push Role as National Unifier." On another occasion, the *New York Times* went after Bruce Lindsey for some bit of chicanery, and the White House called in the ever-reliable Margaret Carlson, who wrote dismissively in *Time* that the *Times* was in a "lather."

Clinton himself would occasionally get involved—at great psychic sacrifice, apparently, for his hatred of the press approaches clinical paranoia. His efforts to charm reporters in off-the-record meetings proved successful, particularly with such grinning shoeshine boys as Jonathan Alter and Thomas Friedman. This was perfect-

ly predictable. Kurtz, following McCurry, attributes the success to Clinton's "charm." But powerful people are always charming when they flatter you, and of Clinton's many gifts his greatest is for flattery. Even more than most people, journalists will tend to mistake mere flattery for soulful discernment.

There is a final weapon in McCur-

ton the truth about Monica Lewinsky is only the latest example. "Why don't you just go ask the president?" a reporter once asked McCurry, about some detail of one scandal or another. "Because I don't want to," McCurry snapped.

This dodge offers multiple benefits. It shuts up reporters, closes off entire avenues of inquiry, and can eventually kill a story. And in a strange inversion, it even makes McCurry seem somehow . . . principled. It seems to reinforce the idea that the press secretary just can't force himself to tell a lie, and makes it easier to ignore the fact that he has, and does, almost daily. Gosh: *Mike loves the truth so much, he doesn't even want to know what it is.*

What a press secretary. (What a president!) If you're a reporter, there are many ways to respond to McCurry's highly sophisticated obfuscation. But surely the most bizarre reaction is to confess your undying admiration and affection for him, as so many White House reporters do.

Kurtz, and the White House, dwell on the subject of how detached Washington journalists are from ordinary Americans. This is undoubtedly true, and nothing illustrates the detachment more than the sad manipulation of the press that Kurtz recounts. Reporters who cover the Clinton White House have become inured to an intensity of deceit that would appall anyone else, in any other walk of life. It would be nice to give a group of ordinary Americans their own copies of *Spin Cycle*, to read the sorry story for themselves, and then ask them to take the quiz at the beginning of this review. Surely they would know that the correct answer is (a). Wouldn't they? ♦



ry's arsenal of spin: voluntary ignorance. Other press secretaries have been kept in the dark—poor Ron Ziegler, most notably. John Kennedy didn't tell Pierre Salinger about the Bay of Pigs in order to protect his spokesman's credibility: Salinger wouldn't have to lie about what he didn't know. But McCurry's ingenious innovation is to keep *himself* in the dark—and to boast that there are subjects about which he will remain stubbornly ignorant. His recent admission that he will not ask Clin-

# ALLY MCBEAL & HER SISTERS

*Feminism Isn't What It Used to Be*

By Melinda Ledden Sidak

In America, there is *Ally McBeal*, the surprise TV hit about a young, quirky, unmarried woman at an elite Boston law firm. In England, there is *Bridget Jones's Diary*, the bestselling comic tale of a year in the life of an unmarried working woman in her thirties. And between the two of them, they may reveal at last, for all to see, the failure of the feminists to capture the hearts and minds of women. If *Ally McBeal* and *Bridget Jones* can be popular feminine icons, then radical feminism has finally lost all the credibility it spent the last thirty years trying to build.

As the television show portrays her, *Ally McBeal* is a Harvard-educated and amazingly successful lawyer, but she also happens to be an anxious neurotic, unfulfilled because she lacks those crucial ingredients of female happiness: a husband and children. The loneliness and longing of her single state are magnified by the presence in her law firm of her childhood sweetheart Billy and, worse, his lawyer-wife.

Heavily influenced by the dream-logic visual effects of the hip music videos, *Ally McBeal* is notorious for its computer-generated graphics and wild filming techniques. It conveys, for instance, its heroine's concern about the ominous ticking of her biological clock with periodic hallucinations of a computer-generated dancing and rollerblading baby. But the message is in more than the visuals: *Ally McBeal* is the woman of the 1990s who turns aside from time to time to say things like, "I want to

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*A lawyer turned stay-at-home wife and mother, Melinda Ledden Sidak lives in the Maryland suburbs of Washington.*

change the world; I just want to get married first."

As if this weren't heretical enough, the female attorneys on the program openly discuss the role of sexual allure in their careers and worry about the day they won't be young and cute anymore. In one recent episode, Ally and her opposing counsel—a woman with toothpaste-commercial teeth—engage in a smiling competition to appeal to the judge during a sidebar conference. Another episode, with Ally defending a college boy who punched out the man who insulted his date, seemed to argue that even in our enlightened times women secretly want a man who will defend their honor.

*Ally McBeal* has attracted some harsh criticism. Noting that the show is written and produced by a man, David Kelley, the *Village Voice* denounced the program's "contempt for women" and called Ally "transparently a male producer's wet dream of the kind of postfeminist career woman a fella could really set his cap for—sensitive, beaten down, and not-so-secretly hungry for a good man to fill the aching void of her life."

Some complaints about the show are justified. Ally's short skirts and little-girl twittishness make her unbelievable as a top-tier attorney. Her dithering and startled Bambi act detract from the serious questions the show raises about male and female roles. Ally's anxieties as an ambitious, professional woman would have greater impact if she stopped acting like a flustered teenager—more forcefully revealing the fact that even successful, real-life women lawyers who behave in a mature and competent manner long to get mar-

ried and have babies.

The heroine of *Bridget Jones's Diary* also wears ridiculously short skirts and worries about getting married. But *Bridget Jones* is a far more comical, endearing, and unpretentious figure than *Ally McBeal*. Begun as a series of columns in the *Independent* by journalist Helen Fielding, *Bridget Jones* chronicles a year in the life of a slightly neurotic thirtyish woman obsessed with her weight and finding a boyfriend. Called the "cult publishing phenomenon of the 1990s," the book has been at the top of the British bestseller list for months and will be published in America by Viking this summer.

Unlike Ally's high-powered work, *Bridget's* dead-end job in the publishing industry is far from the challenging employment that women are supposed to have in the postfeminist era. She is subjected to regular rejection by "commitment phobic" men and to endless queries and tactless remarks about her single state from parents, family friends, and "Smug Marrieds."

To help her through the low moments, she takes comfort in smoking and drinking, reading self-help books, eating chocolate, and "feminist ranting" with her girlfriends, Jude and Shazzer. According to her gay friend Tom, "homosexuals and single women in their thirties have natural bonding: both being accustomed to disappointing their parents and being treated as freaks by society." The basic problem, she thinks, is that "as women glide from their twenties to thirties, the balance of power subtly shifts. Even the most outrageous minxes lose their nerve, wrestling with the first twinges of existential angst: fears of dying alone and being found three weeks later half-eaten by an Alsatian."

Although she professes to be a feminist, *Bridget* can only briefly maintain the pretense, for feminism simply has nothing useful to say to the reality of her life. Her lengthy list of New Year's resolutions—"reduce



circumference of thighs," "learn to program video"—includes the promise not to "sulk about having no boyfriend, but develop inner poise and authority and sense of self as woman of substance, complete *without* boyfriend, as best way to obtain boyfriend." When Shazzer's denunciations of irresponsible men become too loud at their local hangout, Bridget and Jude immediately shush her and sink down into their coats because, "after all, there is nothing so unattractive to a man as strident feminism."

What both the author and the readers of *Bridget Jones* seem to realize is that in certain fundamental ways the modern professional woman has changed little from her eighteenth-century foremothers. Helen Fielding indulges not just her own but every thinking woman's fantasy when she lifts her plot straight out of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, complete with Bridget's very own Mr. Darcy.

*Bridget Jones's Diary* perfectly captures how exhausting it is to be a single woman. It's not just the psycho-

logically debilitating feeling that you are always, somehow, waiting. It's feeling that you have to attend a boring party when you'd rather be home in your pajamas watching television—the feeling that you have to put on mascara and high heels to run to the drugstore, just in case you happen to meet a guy. Then there's the equally demanding job of keeping up the physical plant. Bridget's diary entry for January 15 says it all:

6 p.m. Completely exhausted by entire day of date-preparation. Being a woman is worse than being a farmer—there is so much harvesting and crop spraying to be done: legs to be waxed, under-arms shaved, eyebrows plucked, feet pumiced, skin exfoliated and moisturized, spots cleansed, roots dyed, eyelashes tinted, nails filed, cellulite massaged, stomach muscles exercised. The whole performance is so highly tuned you only need to neglect it for a few days for the whole thing to go to seed.

Perhaps because they are finally willing to tell it as it is, Ally and

Bridget are riding a seismic wave of popularity. In the United States, Ally, despite her irritating demeanor, is being described simultaneously as a new role model, a groundbreaking postfeminist, and a giant leap backward for womankind. Millions of women watch her show devotedly and call one another afterwards to talk about what happened. Last month the *Washington Post* profiled a group of single girlfriends who get together each week to watch Ally. All agreed that Ally's story is "the story of my life."

In England, *Bridget Jones* has produced an even greater public response. The book has introduced several neologisms into the language, including "singletons" for spinsters and "Smug Marrieds" for married friends. Slightly flaky, risqué behavior is described as "very Bridget Jonesy." Two sequels and a movie are planned. There are newspaper and magazine debates between real-life singletons and smug marrieds, and between single thirtysomething women and their male counterparts. There are serious interviews with scholars and psychotherapists about the anxieties of single women, and lighthearted profiles of real-life Bridget Joneses, complete with numerical standings for how they compare to the book's character. As the *Guardian* observed last September, "It's as if single women in their thirties were a new discovery."

The idea that women, even highly educated, successful women, still want marriage and family is something most people have realized for a considerable time. Notwithstanding feminist theories to the contrary, it has been discussed and alluded to tactfully in the press and debated in journals of opinion. The sudden cult popularity of Ally and Bridget, however, suggests that we have moved beyond all that to a full-blown cultural obsession with single women.

One explanation may be demographics. The percentage of single people has been increasing much

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faster than that of married people, and the number of women who waited until their thirties to marry and have children has also risen steadily.

But the better explanation is probably that there is now an entire generation of women who grew up expecting the tenets of feminism to be true. Told that marriage is an artificial construct designed to oppress women and fed a steady diet of popular slogans like "A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle," they have been told the way to be happy and fulfilled is to have a career. They have been encouraged to have sexual relations with men without demanding or expecting emotional commitment in return.

When they grew up and spent some time in the real world, however, things turned out to be different. It turned out that many jobs involve no more than going to the office every day and sitting in front of a word processor in a cubicle. In fact, Ally McBeal's desire to get married would be even more understandable if the work of young associates in a law firm were portrayed accurately—if she were shown doing library research, document review, and proofreading for fourteen hours a day, instead of arguing high-profile cases in court.

The disillusionment is compounded by the feeling of "Nobody told us!" Three decades of established feminism in the United States has guaranteed that women believe few of the old-fashioned warnings about the perils that lie ahead. Who today knows that she should look for a husband while in her twenties because the pickings and the opportunities to meet men get slimmer with every passing year? Indeed, the wonder isn't that a lot of women in their thirties are desperate to get married, but how many succeed.

The fervor for Ally McBeal and Bridget Jones in the late 1990s is proof that a critical mass of women have been forced to relearn old lessons the hard way. "Have finally

realized the secret of happiness with men," writes Bridget Jones. "And it is with deep regret, rage, and an over-

whelming sense of defeat" that she admits the moral of her story: "Do as your mother tells you." ♦

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## NO ONE'S A KEYNESIAN NOW

### *The Fall of Government and the Rise of Markets*

By Lawrence F. Kaplan

**I**t was sixty years ago that Samuel Insull—an American tycoon who lost it all—died, penniless, on a Paris subway platform. Insull is barely remembered today, but it wasn't always so: He used to be held up as a cautionary tale.

During the booming 1920s, Insull was considered an investment sage. At the peak of his power, he held eleven corporate presidencies, sixty-five chairmanships, and eighty-five directorships. But his empire collapsed after the 1929 crash, and he was indicted for larceny and embezzlement. The unlucky mogul fled to Europe, where he lived an unhappy exile, a merchant without a home.

Back in the United States, Franklin Roosevelt promised to "get the Insulls." New Dealers invoked Insull's name whenever the Republican party threatened the pace of regulatory legislation. "Insullism," which had been a celebrated creed when the economy roared, became an all-purpose epithet for commercial avarice.

Our present era certainly would not have handed Insull so cruel a fate. Capitalism now reigns triumphant. Former Communist states eagerly court American investors while attempting to divine the mys-

teries of market economics. It seems that our government can do no right and our market no wrong. Commerce has trumped politics and much else besides.

Such giddiness—understandable as it is—has led many to embrace an aggressive brand of economism: a

tendency to see the world and all its social goods through green eyeshades. An increasing volume of international transactions,

we are told, will hasten peace, political freedom, and the obsolescence of national identity. The domestic corollary holds that all will be well if we assign to the private sector most governmental functions. Like Marxian theologians of years past, our economic determinists advise us that, if we change the economic base, the rest will follow.

How did we arrive at this point? How did we get from vilifying Samuel Insull to championing the very qualities that made him a vituperated household name during the Depression? Daniel Yergin and Joseph Stanislaw grapple with this question in their new book, *The Commanding Heights: The Battle Between Government and the Marketplace That Is Remaking the Modern World*. The title refers to a speech delivered by Lenin in 1922, in which he reassured his audience that, the New Economic Policy notwithstanding, the state

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Lawrence F. Kaplan is a fellow in strategic studies at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies.

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would continue to control the most important levers of the Soviet economy—"the commanding heights." From here, Yergin and Stanislaw recount the absorbing tale of how the world became enamored and then utterly disillusioned with government dominance of the market.

Until recently, most governments agreed with Lenin that ultimately the state served as a more trustworthy arbiter of economic affairs than the market. Yet the degree of government intervention varied widely among nations: Where socialist countries opted for state ownership, the United States preferred regulation. Even so, the Depression and other events spurred Western governments to ever greater levels of economic management, and for decades the strategy seemed to succeed. During the post-war era, Americans prospered as never before. And the nations of Western Europe, with their carefully managed "mixed economies," enjoyed "thirty glorious years."

In Yergin and Stanislaw's telling, faith in "government knowledge" of economic matters peaked in the early 1970s with Richard Nixon's decision to institute price controls, coupled with his declaration, "Now I am a Keynesian." Soon after, the state's position atop the commanding heights began to weaken. In the United States, the failures of the government to deal adequately with stagflation and the fallout from the 1973 oil crisis disabused many of their enthusiasm for Keynesianism. Though it would require astronomical levels of unemployment to turn the Europeans around, a debt crisis to do the same in the Third World, and finally the collapse of the Soviet model, by the early 1990s a new worldwide consensus had emerged. "The specter of market failure had shaped four decades of government economic policies," write the authors. "But the [new] message . . . was that government could fail, too."

Yergin and Stanislaw treat perfunctorily—and with respect to

Keynes, somewhat unfairly—the collective loss of faith in statist economic solutions. But the book's compelling survey of the ideas and personalities driving today's market enthusiasm more than compensates for this brevity. The authors have a colorful cast of characters at their disposal. There is, to begin with, Malaysia's unhinged prime minister, Mohamad Mahathir, holding forth on the "villainous acts of sabotage"

perpetrated by international speculators. Then too we witness novelist-cum-free-market advocate Mario Vargas Llosa decking novelist-cum-Castro apologist Gabriel García Márquez one evening at a Mexico City theater. And, of course, we meet Insull.

Such sketches are Yergin's specialty and will be familiar to readers of his Pulitzer-prize-winning history of oil, *The Prize*. They serve a valuable function, economic history having

earned its reputation as a rather tedious sub-discipline. Moreover, the policies and processes that govern today's market were not produced by the inevitable laws of history, but rather by men and women and their ideas. Many of these individuals will be familiar only to economists. Few will recognize, for instance, Keith Joseph, the British politician whose lectures on the free market informed Margaret Thatcher's economic program. But according to the authors, Joseph "did as much as any other single person around the world to reshape the debate about government and the marketplace."

Unlike so many recent books that promise to unlock the secrets of the new economy, *The Commanding Heights* pledges only to tell us how we arrived at the present moment. Still, after almost four hundred pages of artfully related history, one could expect Yergin and Stanislaw to offer a few predictions. Perhaps wisely, they do not. They do, however, leave some important questions on the table.

The critical tests that will shape the ongoing battle between government and marketplace, the authors suggest, will be these: Does the market provide basic material necessities? Does it foster a fairly equitable distribution of wealth? Will it erode national identity? How will it cope with demographic shifts? Yergin and Stanislaw provide no answers, but they conclude that, if the market is to prevail, it must foster a moral stance other than one grounded in self-interest.

The authors seem optimistic that the marketplace will prove equal to this task, while conceding that few would go to war and "die with the words 'free markets' on their lips." Beneath this eloquently stated observation, however, lies an uncomfortable truth: The marketplace possesses less moral appeal than is frequently ascribed to it by the most insistent laissez-faire advocates.

In recent years, it has become apparent that market values con-

tribute unevenly to the nation's civic and cultural health, fostering widespread atomism. The market erodes national sovereignty as well, and, with it, much of the state's legitimate authority. For the citizens of many countries—Iraq, Iran, and Burma, to name just a few—this dissolution

probably comes as a welcome development. But in a democracy such as ours, it does not. Should Americans allow market identity to supersede civic virtue and national allegiance, we will surely end up as latter-day Samuel Insulls—consumers without a home. ♦



## THE MOST DESPISED VICE *Smoking and Its Enemies*

By Fred Barnes

**W**hen I started smoking as a teenager, I knew it was dreadful for my health. This was a few years before the surgeon general's warning appeared on cigarette packs, but everyone knew smoking was bad. My friends and I talked about the possibility of stunt-ing our growth. We were short, so this was a significant issue. We worried about lung cancer, too. But we smoked anyway. I started with Kents (with the Micronite filter, of course), switched to Lucky Strikes, and at last turned to Salems, which I'd once dismissed as a girl's cigarette because of the menthol. Then, my smoking career came to an end.

Why had I chosen to smoke roughly a pack a day for more than fifteen years? The answer is simple: Smoking is very enjoyable. Dr. C. Everett Koop, Congressman Henry Waxman, and other enthusiasts of the anti-smoking movement don't understand this, but it's true. Smok-ing is relaxing. You can often do other things better and more pleasurable while smoking—read, watch a basketball game, drink beer, play cards,

**Jacob Sullum**  
*For Your Own Good*  
*The Anti-Smoking Crusade and the Tyranny of Public Health*

Free Press, 338 pp., \$25

write. And it doesn't cause immediate harm. After smoking for an entire evening, you can drive home without wrecking the car. I'm not sorry I quit, given the long-term health conse-quences, but I'd probably still be smoking were it not for my wife, Barbara. Once a two-pack-a-day smoker, she quit cold turkey after spilling an ash on the head of our first child (the kid wasn't burned). She

made me stop, too.

My experience is similar to that of many, many people I know. But it clashes with the notion of smoking that has come to dominate public policy and has turned smokers—still 25 percent of all American adults—into outcasts. According to this view, smokers are stupid and weak, lured into smoking by clever advertising when they were teenagers. They are not well informed, even now, about how bad tobacco is for them. And they've been held hostage by tobacco companies through the addictive power of nicotine.

All of these assumptions are false, but the facts haven't slowed the anti-smoking movement one bit. Its leaders are convinced they know what's best for benighted smokers, and they aim to help.

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

How they go about it is the subject of *For Your Own Good*, Jacob Sullum's surprisingly understated tale of America's health cops in action. Sullum, a senior editor of the libertarian magazine *Reason*, has written a readable, well-reported account of the near-triumph of anti-smoking zealots in America. I figured a libertarian would stomp mercilessly on tobacco's foes. But if anything, Sullum is gentler on the anti-smokers than is warranted. He believes they're "sincere when they say they do not want to ban tobacco—for now." I don't believe they are. In fact, I think the evidence in Sullum's book proves beyond a reasonable doubt that anti-smoking elitists want to destroy the tobacco industry and prevent as many people from smoking as is possible through the coercive power of government.

Sullum is neither a defender of smoking nor a tobacco-industry dupe. But at least he understands the rational calculation that smokers make: pleasure now over the possibility of bad health later. The anti-smokers just don't get this. As Sullum writes, "The failure of tobacco's opponents to understand its appeal" amounts to "a blindness." It causes anti-smokers to distrust average people. It leads them to adopt dubious means to achieve their goal. They are not honest people.

Sullum doesn't fault the anti-smokers for disliking tobacco advertising, which puts smoking in a positive light. But he does zing them for pretending that advertising causes smoking. The studies about Joe Camel, for instance, show only that kids have heard of him; about 85 percent still don't like cigarettes. In fact, teenagers begin smoking because their peers and parents smoke, and the kids perceive the risks as small. "Exposure to advertising does not independently predict the decision to smoke, and smokers themselves rarely cite advertising as an important influence on their behavior," Sullum writes. So why do anti-smokers stress advertising anyway?

Because if advertising causes smoking, then individuals don't make a free choice to smoke. They are victims who must be kept from succumbing to the tobacco industry's wiles.

What's more, science is putty in the hands of the anti-smoking movement. Sullum points particularly to the misuse of evidence about "environmental smoke" and addiction to tobacco. Nothing was more important to the enemies of tobacco than establishing that stray fumes harm non-smokers. Otherwise, it's just a



matter of smokers' hurting themselves, and there's far less justification for Draconian limits on smoking. But if innocent bystanders are suffering, government has grounds to ban smoking in offices, stores, factories, stadiums, parks, bowling alleys, restaurants, and bars. (Private residences may be next, the excuse being that children are abused by smoke.) The Environmental Protection Agency had to labor long and hard to come up with what Sullum calls "a predetermined conclusion" that environmental smoke is a serious danger. Even when the methodology of studies was changed, the results didn't

show a statistically significant link between ambient smoke and injury to non-smokers. EPA officials trumpeted a connection anyway.

In the matter of addiction, the distortion of science was yet more egregious. The aim of the anti-smokers, according to Sullum, was to show that smokers "are slaves to nicotine rather than independent moral agents." Thus, the Food and Drug Administration designated cigarettes as "drug delivery devices" in order to bring them under a more restrictive regulatory regime. Yet this is absurd. If cigarettes do nothing more than deliver a drug, Sullum notes, then coffee is simply a caffeine-delivery device. And obviously, there's a lot more to coffee's appeal than the caffeine: People gather over coffee, chat, read the paper, and so on. The same is true with tobacco. "Smoking may be associated with quiet companionship or lively conversation, relaxation or intense work, sex or solitude," says Sullum. And if nicotine is such an irresistible drug, why are there more former smokers in America than smokers?

The opponents of tobacco don't have a credible answer to this question, particularly since 90 percent who quit did so on their own, using the old-fashioned method, willpower. The sad thing is the anti-smokers probably don't need a good answer. The media are totally on their side, spreading every one of "the 10 myths of the anti-smoking movement" that Sullum spells out. After reading *For Your Own Good*, I'm all the more fearful we're on a slippery slope toward more government intrusion. Sullum isn't being facetious when he suggests the next targets will be fatty foods, overeating, drinking, gun ownership, lack of exercise—"anything that can be said to increase the incidence of disease or injury." Individual taste, already discounted in smoking, won't be a permissible defense for behavior the health police don't like.

So get ready. They have plans for you. ♦

# Parody



SERVING AMERICA SINCE 1964

EYES ONLY

From: Richard Mellon Scaife

To: All Members of TVRWC

March 23, 1998

As you know, the first phase of the Brock Project has succeeded beyond our wildest expectations. As far as the public is concerned, David has broken with the right-wing conspiracy. We are even now well into the second phase of his project, in which he is infiltrating left-wing media and political circles. Within a few months we will move on to stage three, in which David will expose and destroy those institutions from within. I'd like to say at the outset that I know many of you were frustrated when David didn't put the devastating material he gathered on Hillary Clinton into his book on her, but the decision was right: The access he is now getting is priceless. As I've said all along, we don't want to get hung up by an obsession with Bill or Hillary Clinton; it's the whole left-wing power structure we need to destroy.

I hope you have had time to listen to the tapes David has been sending back from his White House meetings. Hillary has a tendency to hiss a lot, so some of her comments are inaudible, but I have technicians excising all the interjections from Sidney Blumenthal ("Absolutely, your First Ladyness! . . . Brilliant! . . . Great Idea!"), so that should make the tapes easier to follow. The tie-clip camera was incredibly useful when David was hanging about in the corridor off the Oval, and I think many of you will be impressed with how nimble Sharon Stone is for a woman of her age.

David will be moving his focus of operations to New York, where key TVRWC asset Frank Rich will be his contact. David will continue to write for Esquire and New York, but he will work hard to get his writings into some successful magazines as well. Over the next few months you will see David writing a series of ever more pathetic and narcissistic essays attacking conservatives and kissing up to liberals. Do not be alarmed that he is laying it on too thick. It turns out the media types love this kind of shameless slobbering.

I will keep you informed as things progress. I believe this time next year we will have achieved all our goals. Onward and Upward!